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MANAGEMENT IN THE UNITED NATIONS:

WORK IN PROGRESS

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Geneva
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ACRONYMS

ACABQ	Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions
CCAQ	Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions
CPC	Committee for Programme and Coordination
DAM	Department of Administration and Management
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
ICSC	International Civil Service Commission
IMIS	Integrated Management Information System
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit
MAS	(the former) Management Advisory Service
OIOS	Office of Internal Oversight Services
PAS	Performance Appraisal System
OHRM	Office of Human Resources Management
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNOG	United Nations Office at Geneva

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

"United Nations management" has been termed an oxymoron, a juxtaposition of incompatibles. Over the past 50 years, there have been various attempts to strengthen United Nations programmes and improve their management, but they have not been well implemented. The unfortunate result has been a growing web of administrative controls and mandates that have enveloped the governing bodies, leadership, and staff of the United Nations in bureaucratic gridlock without providing the intended management culture.

In contrast to past debates and encouragements, the General Assembly insisted very forcefully in December 1993 that a new, "transparent and effective system of accountability and responsibility" be installed by 1 January 1995. The task is daunting. Changing an entrenched large bureaucracy is not like steering a race car (slam on the brakes, spin the wheel, and head off in a new direction), but more like changing the course of an ocean tanker (turn painfully slowly and even accept further movement in the old direction before the new direction asserts itself). Such a major redirection also evokes powerful fears of, and resistance to, any changes in comfortable old ways of doing things.

However, the future status and credibility of the United Nations require it to demonstrate that it is a learning organization which will skillfully and flexibly manage its limited resources to produce results, and that these results will make the maximum possible contribution to meet the changing priority objectives established by Member States.

Progress toward establishment of the new accountability and responsibility system during 1994 and 1995 has been facilitated by strong policy leadership from the Secretary-General and operational leadership from the new team of senior officials in the Department of Administration and Management. A new human resources strategy, and the urgency of more effectively implementing life-and-death peace-keeping and humanitarian field programmes, have also provided strong impetus for change. The current effort is undoubtedly the best, and possibly the last, opportunity to establish a strong management culture and performance emphasis in the United Nations.

Many positive steps toward reform have already been taken. The new process is starting to take hold in a variety of key areas, and senior management support throughout the Secretariat, which is essential for success, appears to be in place. At the same time, this enormous process of change is being done with modest resources, against entrenched habits of mediocre management, and in the midst of continuing operational and financial turbulence for the United Nations. The Inspector believes that additional specific actions in four areas are essential to maintain the momentum that has been generated, and to support strong and dynamic United Nations performance in the future.

Accountability for accountability. Development of the new accountability and responsibility system can be divided into ten major areas. In six of these areas, significant reforms have been launched, which must of course be implemented and refined. In four other key areas, however, implementation of changes has been slow, which could

undermine the entire process if actions are not taken soon. One of the most noticeable features of this massive change process, however, is that the overall complex campaign is being conducted without a fully functioning "command post". In contrast, a recent JIU report on accountability, management improvement and oversight found that new "strategic planning units" are appearing throughout the United Nations system, an approach which the JIU has commended to all the organizations (paragraphs 9-89).

RECOMMENDATION 1. The Secretary-General should establish a small but full-time unit for (a) integrated strategic planning, (b) systematic and transparent monitoring and enhancement of the new system of accountability and responsibility and (c) the "management of change". The Unit could be located in his Office or in the Department of Administration and Management, but should become the essential "focal point" unit which is fully up-to-date on all aspects of United Nations strategic and managerial change and initiatives (paragraphs 90-95 and 102).

Clear responsibility for programme delivery. The General Assembly called for both clear responsibility for programme delivery and a mechanism ensuring the accountability of programme managers. Medium-term plans and programme budgets, although currently being reformed, are still quite general and long-term. New six-month work plans for departments and offices and annual responsibility statements for senior officials are useful, but are also rather general. Secretariat monitoring and evaluation processes have been, and continue to be, weak. However, the new Secretariat performance appraisal system requires unit work plans. A recent Secretariat report on procurement reform actions shows that such work plans, combined with time-limited objectives, can serve as the key mechanism to finally and firmly establish both the clear accountability of United Nations managers for programme delivery, which the General Assembly has specifically requested, and strengthened performance review (paragraphs 23-30, 36-45, 67-74, and 96-98).

RECOMMENDATION 2. The Secretary-General should ensure that specific objectives, together with dates for their completion, are included in all unit work plans in the Secretariat. These time-limited objectives should also be included in any reports to intergovernmental bodies on the status and progress of individual programmes and major activities, and in reviews made by internal and external oversight bodies (paragraphs 99-102).

Related issues of Secretariat management reform. Three important areas are intertwined with the new accountability and responsibility system. First, United Nations "managers" are a vaguely-defined and weakly-supported group: much more attention must be given to encouraging and recognizing the good managers, developing the untrained ones, and retraining, reassigning or terminating the bad ones (paragraphs 103-124). Second, "downsizing" of the Organization may force the pace of managerial reform and the creation of a "performance culture". If carefully applied, however, this process can also lead to much more effective deployment and use of United Nations managerial and other staff resources (paragraphs 125-139). Third, the new accountability and responsibility system is presently centered in New York, but most staff are not: delegation and decentralization measures to better support and empower managers in other duty stations will be critical to the success of the new system (paragraphs 140-149).

Intergovernmental body oversight and leadership. The Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary) of the General Assembly is just as "accountable for accountability" to Member States as is the Secretariat. The 1995 JIU system-wide report on accountability found that many organizations have been working to strengthen the orientation of performance reporting toward results, increase external reviews, and establish new, more specialized, subsidiary intergovernmental oversight bodies or processes. However, the Fifth Committee is currently overwhelmed with a flood of documents and a seemingly endless calendar of meetings. It also lacks the substantive and succinct reporting on performance and results which it needs to fulfill its oversight and decision-making responsibilities. By putting its own house in order, this key Committee could set an example of managerial excellence for the remainder of the United Nations to emulate (paragraphs 150-167).

RECOMMENDATION 3. To help overcome the present weakness of United Nations performance reporting, the Fifth Committee might wish to consider a series of measures to make Secretariat management and performance reporting to it more understandable, timely, action-oriented, and focused (paragraph 165).

RECOMMENDATION 4. To more adequately fulfill its central role in the new accountability and responsibility system, the Fifth Committee might wish to consider actions to systematically reassess its workflows and annual calendar, and to establish small, professionally qualified subcommittees, with minimal but full-time staff, to divide tasks, enhance specialization, and focus much more clearly and forcefully on major management and oversight issues and processes (paragraphs 168-175).

Some non-recommendations might also be of interest. They did not survive the test of possibility, but would, if implemented, certainly improve management in the United Nations.

The first non-recommendation would be that Member States, and above all the permanent members of the Security Council, should select a Secretary-General primarily for his or her managerial competence. This is a non-recommendation because of the realization that the selection of a Secretary-General is made by politicians and diplomats in Member States, so it can be reliably assumed from the experience of the past that they will continue to select politician/diplomats for the post.

The second non-recommendation proceeds from the non-realization of the first. Assuming that the Member States again select a politician/diplomat as Secretary-General and, if the management function is not fully supported by the Secretary-General at the level of the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management, there should be created a position of Deputy Secretary-General to manage the organization (as recently proposed by a former United Nations Under-Secretary-General). Such a Deputy would stay at home and mind the shop while the Secretary-General was dealing with world leaders on weighty problems. This is a non-recommendation because it is unlikely that a Secretary-

General could find a Deputy to whom he or she would be willing to entrust the requisite managerial powers.

The third non-recommendation (also proposed by the former Under-Secretary-General) is to create an Executive Secretariat to continue the modernization of the staff function. This has already begun through the recent replacement of the outmoded and inefficient Chef de Cabinet arrangement by an Executive Office headed by a Chief of Staff. An Executive Secretariat, if properly employed, could do much to assure the horizontal and vertical communication so sadly lacking in the present United Nations. Once again, this is a non-recommendation because a political Secretary-General and the top echelons of the Secretariat would be unwilling to risk a loss of personal power should the organization's information flow be routinely controlled by the Executive Secretariat's Director.

I. INTRODUCTION

"Within the UN system there is no authority for providing serious negative consequences. ...tracing blame for the failure of projects was close to impossible given the broad and web-like alliances needed for their implementation. As long as the United Nations does not learn to set goals that are achievable, and make people responsible for achieving them, no one will be accountable."

-- *Comments in the South-North Development Monitor of 9 May 1995 on the lack of accountability which JIU reported in a 1994 review of science and technology projects in Africa.*

"There is a general feeling among staff at all levels...that to varying degrees, personal and professional skills, knowledge, and attitudes...do not correspond sufficiently to those needed to perform respective functions. This results in individual and corporate productivity not being as high as they could be, and in frustration and morale problems among staff... Three main reasons are (1) poor job definition, (2) inappropriate recruitment, selection, and assignment, and (3) insufficient personal and professional development."

-- *Introduction to a strategic planning assessment in a working group of a Secretariat unit, late 1994.*

The General Assembly...
Also requests the Secretary-General, in implementing the restructuring of the Secretariat...to provide adequate resources and to identify clearly units, at appropriate levels, for the implementation of all programmes and activities..."

-- *General Assembly, resolution 47/212 B of 20 May 1993, para. III.4.(b).*

1. As the United Nations celebrates its fiftieth anniversary in 1995, it is engaged in a major effort to establish a "management culture," spurred by observations like those cited above. In light of all the attention devoted to establishing good management in the private and public sectors over the years, one can well ask, why has the United Nations taken so long to reach this point?

2. The annex to this report presents a brief chronology of past efforts. Clearly, there has been too much emphasis on words and promises rather than determined implementation actions, and accountability, oversight, and transparency processes have continued to be quite weak. Now, under severe performance and funding pressures, the United Nations has once again launched a major management change effort.

3. A decade ago the General Assembly (as it has done in almost every mid-decade since the United Nations was founded) established a group of high-level experts (termed the "Group of 18") who launched an ongoing series of management reforms.[1] Their report led

to some success, notably improved methods of budgetary decision-making and a 12 per cent reduction in professional staff posts. By the early 1990s, however, the process had lost momentum.

4. The Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) and the General Assembly, increasingly unhappy with Secretariat attempts to provide more substantive reforms and reporting, tried a new "ultimatum" approach. They called on the Secretariat in late 1993 to establish a new, transparent and effective system of accountability and responsibility by 1 January 1995.

5. The purpose of this report by the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) is to examine progress in this major project to establish United Nations managerial processes and capacities. The Inspector notes some very commendable initiatives already taken, cites areas where more work is needed, and underscores the formidable barriers which must still be overcome. The current effort is critical. If the United Nations cannot now convincingly demonstrate that it can skillfully manage the scarce resources entrusted to it, it may well suffer a serious loss of credibility and support from the international community.

6. The JIU has a direct interest in this process. In reports from 1984-1990 the Unit urged much greater Secretariat accountability, transparency, and substantive reporting to governing bodies.[2] In 1993 it noted many serious deficiencies in accountability, management improvement, and oversight processes in the Secretariat.[3] JIU reports in 1994 and early 1995 cited urgent needs to establish human resources management, reform the hapless staff performance evaluation system, and strengthen and modernize recruitment.[4] In early 1995 the Unit also issued a first-ever inventory and analysis of accountability, management improvement, and oversight activities in organizations throughout the United Nations system.[5]

7. In this report, the Inspector has drawn on the extensive past record and experience of management reform efforts in the hope that, this time, the failures of the past can be avoided. In addition, he reviewed recent documentation on the management initiatives currently under way, and discussed problems, barriers, and potentials with many Secretariat officials and others, both in New York and in Geneva. He wishes to thank all those concerned for their valuable ideas and assistance.

8. Chapter II of this report briefly outlines actions already taken or still needed in the various reform areas identified by the Secretariat in two key 1994 reports to the General Assembly. Chapter III explores a question somehow lost in the current discussions - just who are the Secretariat managers? Chapter IV considers the United Nations management initiatives in the context of the serious organizational reductions being experienced by United Nations system agencies and other large organizations worldwide, and Chapter V surveys the way in which the policy reforms established in New York are being implemented at another duty station, in this case Geneva. Finally, Chapter VI examines the all-important questions of transparency, meaningful performance reporting to governing bodies, and their oversight capabilities. An Annex provides a capsule summary of 50 years of prior United Nations management reform efforts.

II. NEW DIRECTIONS

"The General Assembly,

...

4. Endorses the recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination on the establishment of a transparent and effective system of accountability and responsibility no later than 1 January 1995...

5. Requests the Secretary-General to include in the system of accountability and responsibility the following elements, taking into account relevant experience within and outside the United Nations system:

(a) The establishment of clear responsibility for programme delivery, including performance indicators as a measure of quality control;

(b) A mechanism ensuring that programme managers are accountable for the effective management of the personal and financial resources allocated to them;

(c) Performance evaluation for all officials, including senior officials, with objectives and performance indicators;

(d) Effective training of staff in financial and management responsibilities;"

"Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations", General Assembly resolution 48/218 A of 23 December 1993, Part I.E, "Improvement of the management of the United Nations"

9. This Chapter begins with the major daunting challenges faced by the United Nations in responding to the General Assembly directive cited above. It then discusses six major areas of progress toward management and management systems reform, and four areas in which action has been limited but is very much needed. (Several topics are postponed for subsequent Chapters: existing and future management structures, possible major reductions in total United Nations staffing and funds, implementation of the new system in non-New York duty stations (based on discussions in Geneva), and management reporting and intergovernmental body oversight.)

10. The Chapter concludes by highlighting the importance of managing the new system of accountability and responsibility in a carefully integrated fashion to ensure maximum effectiveness and "accountability for accountability". The United Nations needs in particular to more clearly and specifically adopt the strategic planning and "management of change" approaches increasingly used by other organizations in the United Nations system.

A. The challenge

11. The above "marching orders" from the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report during 1994 on the establishment of the new accountability and responsibility system.[6] The resulting report of August 1994 contains a great deal of

substance and good ideas for the new system. However, it has not yet been acted upon by the Assembly, and indeed has been postponed for consideration to its fiftieth session in the fall of 1995.

12. Part of the reason for this delay is undoubtedly that the Secretary-General's report is confusing. Despite its complexity and many important themes, it contains neither a table of contents nor a summary. Because the report is so central to this progress report, the Inspector therefore provides this brief informal outline of its contents.

I. Introduction
II. System framework
III. Responsibility and authority
  A. Defining responsibilities for achieving strategic objectives
    1. Mandates and directives
    2. Defining the statutory and organizational framework of the organization
    3. Providing information and policy guidance
  B. Need for understood authority and guidance for managers and staff to discharge their responsibilities
    1. Information on resources available
    2. Delegation of authority
    3. Empowerment of managers
    4. Training managers and supervisors
    5. Training staff
IV. Accountability mechanisms
  A. Secretary-General's reporting to intergovernmental and expert bodies
  B. Programme manager accountability for implementing management plans
  C. Staff accountability for delivering outputs and services
  D. Administration of justice
  E. Development of the organizational oversight machinery

V. Conclusion

13. A second report is also central to the current reform efforts. In October 1994 the Secretary-General reported on efforts to "modernize and reenergize human resources management" in the United Nations, including attention to planning and performance management; management culture and skills; work planning and performance appraisal; decentralization and delegation of authority; and enhanced attrition/early retirement.[7] The General Assembly endorsed many of these initiatives in a resolution of December 1994.[8]

14. These two reports identify many actions which combine to form an enormously complex and difficult attempt at organization-wide change. As the Secretary-General's August 1994 report concludes, the United Nations is attempting to overcome half a century of problems and obstacles and to install a real management culture, in order to create a mission-driven and results-oriented Organization.[9]

15. Implementing such a comprehensive management reform process in an organization normally involves three stages:

(a) consciousness-raising - making people aware that serious problems exist and that, for organizational health and even survival, decisive action is needed to overcome them;

(b) mobilization - gathering sufficient and skilled resources to carry out the change process in a timely, effective, and coordinated fashion;

(c) transformation - if the two preceding processes are successfully implemented, and sufficient effort is applied, the organization should be able to move into the desired new mode of operation.

16. Unfortunately, some very formidable barriers are also arrayed against this process, in general, and especially in the United Nations (still other barriers to building a "management culture" are discussed in Chapter III).

(a) The Organization has a seemingly perpetual financial crisis. Tardy payment of assessments and uncertain payments of special or voluntary contributions create continual uncertainty and poor cash flow, which make it very difficult to practice good financial management and marshall resources to effectively carry out established objectives. Proposals to deal more systematically with these problems will be an important item for discussion at the fiftieth session of the General Assembly in 1995.

(b) "Management" as a specific topic has always had a low priority in the United Nations. It has often been labelled as a "non-substantive" activity, even though the Organization has moved steadily in recent years away from a dominant emphasis on negotiating and policy-setting functions toward a current heavy emphasis on operational activities and emergency operations. Chapter III discusses the many aspects of "management" in the Secretariat that still remain to be discovered, developed, and clarified.

(c) In particular, the explosive growth in large-scale, unpredictable peace-keeping and humanitarian operations worldwide has placed enormous strain on already-scarce United Nations management systems and staff. United Nations total field mission budgets mushroomed from about $US 0.5 billion in 1991 up to almost $4.0 billion in 1994. The Secretariat has had much difficulty with this heavy new operational workload. It continues to work with determination to improve peace-keeping and humanitarian programme management. The amazing thing, however, is that the Secretariat avoided a total administrative systems breakdown in the face of unexpected, massive and fast-moving field operations of a type and scale that the Organization has never encountered before.

(d) Management and organizational change are always difficult, even in the best of times. People are comfortable with routines they understand, and fear the unknown conditions which change will bring. Yet modern organizations must master the "management of change", by rethinking past approaches and encouraging flexibility, creativity and innovation to adapt to changing circumstances. The effort to establish a responsive new management culture to replace the long-established United Nations traditional culture will definitely not be easy or quick and perhaps not even possible.

(e) The United Nations has long-standing staffing problems. A recent JIU report on recruitment found that the current process of staff recruitment is haphazard, subjective, and highly personalized, and concluded that deficient personnel policies and practices are major obstacles to reforming the United Nations.[10] The Inspectors recommended actions to make personnel policies and procedures more simple, transparent, and relevant, which the General Assembly endorsed. In preparing this report, as noted in the following chapters, the Inspector found that the following problems continually recur as barriers to greater managerial accountability and leadership, and to improved overall performance:

(1) The United Nations Charter calls for "the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity" as paramount considerations in the employment of staff with "due regard" to recruitment of staff on as wide a geographic basis as possible, but over the years the quantitative system of "geographic distribution" calculations has become a very elaborate part of personnel processes;

(2) Additional complexity is created by cumbersome rules, procedures and practices designed to protect staff rights (see section C.3 following), which, however, also weaken managers' ability to lead and to establish a "high-performance" and results-oriented environment;

(3) Hiring and promotion rules are often bent to allow personal and political objectives to take precedence: the active "micromanagement" and involvement of Member States in personnel decisions, sometimes down to lower-level professional and even clerical staffing decisions, has often been cited;

(4) In light of all these factors, recruitment and placement are often terribly slow and complicated, not only because of all the "red tape" involved and the added heavy workload of recent, large-scale field mission recruitments, but also perhaps to accommodate (or avoid offending) the various competing interests by postponing or blurring decisions;

(5) As noted in the second introductory quote to this report, when inappropriate recruitment is combined with poor job definition and weak staff training and development, United Nations programme productivity clearly and unavoidably suffers.

(f) Other negative past experiences in the United Nations have also built up strong barriers to management reform, as discussed in the following sections. Time-consuming but not very useful planning and budgeting processes, and weak monitoring and evaluation of performance, have led to much dissatisfaction from the General Assembly, Secretariat leadership, and programme managers. Management training for managers and staff has, until very recently, been almost non-existent. Most critically, the negative attitudes created by many past failures to properly assess staff performance jeopardize current attempts to reform this essential element of a "performance culture".

B. Progress made

17. The two 1994 Secretariat reports on the new system of accountability and responsibility cite many specific actions under way or to be taken. In this Chapter the Inspector attempts to provide a brief but comprehensive overview of past problems, recent developments, and problems and challenges to be faced in each major area of action, to provide a broad overview of the status of progress in developing the new system. He begins with six areas in which some significant progress has been made.

1. Human resources strategy and planning

18. The "Group of 18" experts emphasized in 1986 that the efficiency of the United Nations depended largely on Secretariat performance, which in turn depended on the quality and dedication of the staff. It urged, inter alia, improved leadership and management of human resources.[11] As it recommended, the personnel office was quickly renamed the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM), but the substance of personnel work scarcely changed. In fact, a division for personnel policy development and analysis was actually abolished during the financial crisis of 1987. The Secretary-General recognized in 1990 the need to "revive and implement" a human resources planning and information activity in OHRM, but no action was taken.[12]

19. In its 1994 report on problems of women's advancement in the Secretariat in a "new era" of human resources management and accountability, the JIU concluded that OHRM could not carry out its substantive responsibilities for effective use of the United Nations most important strategic asset - its staff - without a strategic "brain". It urged that a small strategy unit be established.[13] In its 1995 report on accountability in the United Nations system, the JIU further cited the human resources approach, with its emphasis on carefully selecting, developing, managing, and supporting human assets, as a key new development which is transforming contemporary management and organizations, and which is now gathering momentum among organizations of the United Nations system.[14]

20. The 1994 report of the Secretary-General acknowledged the need to "modernize and re-energize human resources management" in the United Nations, particularly by tying human resources planning to the overall strategic plans of the United Nations. It acknowledged the lack of planning capacity as a significant cause of OHRM management weaknesses, and recommended that a small planning, policy and management information unit be established to develop such functions as staff needs assessments, succession planning, skills inventories, career planning and counselling, a career development handbook, and performance management.[15]

21. The General Assembly endorsed the human resources management strategy and establishment of, and 1995 funding for, the planning unit.[16] The proposed programme budget for 1996-1997 lays out detailed proposals for the new Planning and Development Service reporting directly to the Assistant-Secretary General in OHRM.[17] The Inspector was informed in August 1995 that, following the usual drawn-out Secretariat recruitment process, several candidates had been selected to fill the new posts, who possess the specialized human resource skills and experience required. In addition, a new strategic planning process has begun in the Personnel Service in Geneva, which is a promising start toward developing stronger decentralized human resources functions in the Secretariat.

22. The 1996-1997 programme budget section states that the establishment of a true OHRM planning capacity "is crucial to the implementation of a modern human resources management system for the United Nations." The Inspector very much agrees, and finds it a critical first step toward the overall strategic planning, performance management, and new management culture which the United Nations must establish.

2. Programme planning and budgeting

23. The United Nations and the rest of the United Nations system established programme planning systems - composed of medium-term plans, (usually biennial) programme budgets, and monitoring and evaluation reporting - in the 1970s, in a process in which the JIU was actively involved. This cycle has been considered an important framework for determining organizational strategic directions, priorities, and objectives; resources required on a programmatic basis; and subsequent progress made toward the objectives.

24. Unfortunately, as JIU found in reports in 1988 and 1993, the United Nations programme planning and budgeting processes are presently unable to serve as proper frameworks for accountability and oversight. Leaving aside for the moment weak monitoring and evaluation reporting (see Chapter VI), the basic criticisms of programme planning and budgeting have included:

(a) serious delays in submitting many programme budgets, and incomplete budget submissions, which led intergovernmental bodies to "deplore" or "deeply regret" the disruptions caused in their reviews of these documents;

(b) significant quality problems due to poorly-formulated programmes, vague objectives, and imprecise outputs, consistently attributed to a lack of training in programming methods and to inattentive supervisors;

(c) no mechanism and requirement to assess actual resource requirements, no workload standards and very few meaningful performance indicators, and no proper linkage between organizational structures, budgetary appropriations, and unit work programmes;

(d) a preoccupation with financial reporting rather than with substantive programme performance, which prevents Member States from relating inputs to outputs and determining if they are getting "value for money";

(e) excessive complexity in budgetary procedures, continuing methodological problems, voluminous documents, and continuous programme changes by, and fragmented responsibilities among, the many intergovernmental bodies involved in programme review.[18]

25. The Inspector, and many others, believe that the fundamental problem is that tremendous amounts of time and effort are being spent at present on programme planning and budgeting with little result: these processes have been very "high-cost, low-benefit". Just as frustrating is that they have consumed much time and attention that could have been spent assessing results and improving future programmes. Thus, a recent internal oversight report found that in the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) programme oversight was excessively mechanistic. Further, the programme budget mandated by the General Assembly ran in parallel with an actual work programme which was developed on an ad hoc and continuous basis by the commission's working parties and committees. This "serious situation" suggested that there was no guiding framework and that the whole

programme of work was apt to lose its focus.[19] (The Inspector, however, favors another interpretation, as discussed below. Since the programme budget process is a very slow one - the current unit programme budgets were drafted in late 1992 to direct activities in 1994 and 1995 - it is not surprising that these old intentions no longer fit rapidly changing economic and social programmes and needs.)

26. Ever since 1983 the Secretariat has sought new budgetary processes and formats. In 1990 the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) expressed real doubts about the value of the medium-term plan: the verbosity and length of the proposals, the quality of intergovernmental reviews, and the lack of relevant evaluation activities.[20] In 1993 a group of experts considered a new format and approach to programme planning. They concluded bluntly that "Much more time is spent on reviewing plans and budgets than on implementation and evaluation" and that "This imbalance needs to be corrected."[21]

27. As has occurred periodically in the past, the 1994-1995 proposed programme budget was submitted very late, which led the General Assembly to "deplore...the extraordinary and unacceptable delay" which necessitated "a review on the basis of incomplete and inadequately transparent proposals".[22] The Secretariat, however, completed the 1996-1997 budget submission in good time. The submission is still quite lengthy and detailed, but it does contain a welcome introductory summary, a more attractive layout, and attempts at performance indicators and workload statistics. Most significantly, given the pressures for cost-effectiveness and streamlining (see Chapter IV on downsizing), the total proposed biennial programme budget shows a modest decline, by a net $109 million (2.4 per cent) and 109 net posts (201 posts eliminated, against 66 added and 26 transferred from the peace-keeping budget to the regular budget) from the previous biennium.

28. Preparation of the next medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001 is also underway, with a prototype of a new format[23] to be considered by the General Assembly during 1995 and the plan to be submitted to it for adoption in 1996. Departmental submissions are being prepared by November 1995. Based on several General Assembly resolutions and Secretary-General's reports,[24] and recognizing the doubts about the present plan's utility, the new format (a perspective and a programme framework) attempts a greater sense of unity of purpose, clearer lines of responsibility, greater managerial accountability, and thus a more concise, results-oriented document.

29. The Inspector finds that these new efforts are likely to be an improvement on past documents. In any event, they provide an essential longer-term goals and programming discipline. However, the Inspector urges that these planning and budget processes be watched very closely in the future to ensure that they are streamlined to the maximum extent, are worth the time invested in them, and particularly that their focus on "intents" and "objectives" does not continue to be an excuse or a diversion from a strong emphasis on performance and on results obtained. Because of the many negative assessments made of the existing and preceding medium-term plans and programme budgets, the Inspector believes that they should be judged "guilty" of distracting policy-makers' and decision-makers' attention from real programme performance until they clearly prove their value in helping to create a dynamic, high-performance United Nations.

30. In addition, two closely related elements must be considered. First, in order to effectively link broad programme planning and budget directives at the top with individual

staff work plans at the bottom, a strong mid-level system of performance management is also essential. This, however, does not now exist and will take much effort and attention to properly construct (see subsection C.2 following). Second, in order to ensure that the new system of accountability and responsibility will be truly integrated and effective, a specific, ongoing strategic planning process (not just four-year programme plans and two-year budget documents) is required to respond to rapid changes and demands on the United Nations (see section D. following).

3. Management training

31. The almost total lack of management training in the United Nations has been a serious problem for many years. In 1978 the ACABQ noted with concern the difficulties of establishing in-house management training to "create and sustain a management climate" in the Secretariat.[25] In 1986 the then-Secretary-General had to once again cite the need for improved management "at all levels", and state that a "principal task" for him would be "to ensure in future that management skills are given high priority in recruitment and in training."[26]

32. However, it was only in 1992 that a new Secretary-General recognized that "at this time in the United Nations history, the quality of leadership and management is crucial." Citing the "link between managerial skills and programme delivery", he announced a comprehensive system of management training. The new programme seeks to develop leadership and managerial skills in senior officials; to develop a cadre of staff well-trained in financial and administrative functions to serve at any duty station; and to develop supervisory skills, a positive work environment, and enhanced productivity through enhanced performance management.[27]

33. Given the very modest funds available, initial management training during 1993 and 1994 concentrated on a series of management workshops/retreats for Director-level staff and above at duty stations around the world. Subsequently, leadership and management training have expanded considerably in duty stations around the world. Workshops on implementation strategies were held for senior staff during 1994, and are planned in 1995 for staff responsible for producing outputs. Intensive training of most professional staff in the new performance appraisal system has already been completed during 1995, with other staff scheduled for this training as well. Training in "people management skills" will be offered to directors during 1995, and to senior professional staff during 1996. In addition, in 1995 a first catalogue of Staff Development Programme courses has been issued for staff at New York Headquarters.[28]

34. The management training programme appears now to be well launched. Regular budget funding has grown steadily and significantly from $0.2 million in 1992-1993 (plus a one-time contribution of $1.2 million in extra-budgetary funds) to about $1.5 million in 1994-1995 and $3.5 million requested for 1996-1997 (additional computer, substantive skills, and other specialized training bring the total to about $7.9 million). This growth is quite encouraging, but the $3.5 million still represents only about 0.14 per cent of the total $2.51 billion proposed in the 1996-1997 United Nations biennial regular budget. This is far below the several per cent that many other public and private international organizations regularly spend in this area.

35. Just as importantly, management training is starting to have the intended stimulative effect. The Inspector found an encouraging pattern of actions in major departments and offices in New York, Geneva and other duty stations to establish strategic planning efforts and participative management development and team-building exercises, which build on the original senior management retreats. Although training funds are modest and a full-scale programme at all duty stations for all staff is not yet established, management training is finally beginning to fulfill its role as the essential building block for a new management culture.

4. New performance appraisal system

36. A 1994 JIU report observed that the Secretariat had tried on five different occasions to establish sound performance evaluation systems, but had always been unable to implement them. The existing system, which gives "excellent" or "very good" ratings to almost all staff, is therefore essentially meaningless for promotion, placement and other career development purposes. Staff move through their careers with occasional promotions and steady salary step increases for longevity, unaffected by the work they actually do.[29]

37. The "Group of 18" had pressed the Secretary-General in 1986 to report annually on staff performance ratings and promotions, but action was delayed. The General Assembly then called on the Secretary-General in 1993 to "undertake without delay a complete review of the performance evaluation system" to develop it into "an effective system that accurately assesses staff performance and improves staff accountability". It also requested that he ensure effective application of staff regulations concerning separation from service for staff whose performance evaluations are consistently poor.[30] The General Assembly also called for performance evaluation for all officials (including senior officials who had previously been exempted), with objectives and performance indicators, as part of the new accountability and responsibility system to be installed by 1 January 1995.[31]

38. The JIU concluded in its 1994 report that sound and transparent performance appraisal is central to establishing a more effective United Nations and bolstering the Organization's credibility. To properly implement such a system, however, there must be a strong overall accountability system; top management and managers' support; a structure of work plans and performance management; and adequate training, time, and resources to properly introduce the system.

39. The JIU recommended in 1994 that OHRM, which was then rushing to try to implement the new Performance Appraisal System (PAS) by 1 January 1995 as the General Assembly had requested, make 1995 a transitional year.[32] However, after further testing, assessment, and discussions with staff, the new system is being phased in with a transition period beginning in July 1995. This means that the present, very defective performance evaluation system will continue until the middle of 1996, and that the first official annual ratings under the new PAS system will not be available until the middle of 1997.[33]

40. During 1995 intensive PAS training is taking place worldwide, under contract with a training consultant. As of July 1995, about 3,900 of 4,500 staff from senior General Service to Under-Secretaries General had already completed their training, with a further 7,600 General Service staff to be trained between September 1995 and March 1996. The

important PAS training has thus already been largely implemented, with the remainder scheduled.

41. The PAS training has generated some strong and conflicting emotions. It got "out in front of" the rest of the new accountability and responsibility system, and has borne the brunt of considerable staff cynicism and mistrust. Some staff doubt that the new system will be any better than its failed predecessors. Some staff and staff representatives reject the new system as "inappropriate" and "too complex" without suggesting constructive alternatives, or seek elaborate protective procedures which could stifle the new system in the endless and crippling litigation of the past. Other staff, however, are quite frustrated at poor Secretariat management and hope that the new PAS can help correct this problem by building teamwork and a strong results orientation. Still others, particularly younger staff, welcome the idea of a system that will at least attempt to encourage good management and concentrate on clear work tasks, results and merit, rather than the vague assignments and generalized staff "attributes" that were rated in the past.

42. In light of the dismal past record of United Nations performance evaluation and the above criticisms of the reform process, it is important to return to first principles. The United Nations Charter states in Article 101 that "The paramount consideration in the employment of the staff... shall be the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence, and integrity." Further, under the "Noblemaire principle", United Nations staff receive salaries comparable to those of the best-paid national civil service (which for many years has been the United States Civil Service.) In accord with the longstanding principle of "a fair day's work for a fair day's pay", this highest possible salary level also obligates United Nations staff to demonstrate the highest possible levels of performance, efficiency, and results.

43. The Charter and Noblemaire precepts must be applied. Hard-earned experience in other organizations demonstrates that systematic, consultative performance appraisal systems like the new one being introduced in the Secretariat, if they are well-documented and steadily applied, are the essential mechanism for honoring and applying these performance principles fairly, efficiently, and with a minimum of administrative dispute and adjudication.[34]

44. A performance appraisal system can only be truly effective if it is part of a performance culture. The PAS training and the management training programme are starting to build the necessary understanding of a much more dynamic management and results emphasis among staff and in United Nations duty stations around the world. Adjustments are being made to the more cumbersome elements of the PAS process,[35] and will continue. What is important is that this fundamental element of the new accountability and responsibility system, with its emphasis on performance, results and work plans (see section C.2 following) continues to move steadily forward to full implementation.

45. The Inspector was concerned to learn that while some units have already begun the provisional year of applying the new PAS, others are waiting for related events to occur or are uncertain about when they will proceed. What is needed now is to ensure that the new system will be installed systematically and fully throughout the Secretariat for its provisional period, to avoid a sixth consecutive Secretariat failure to install a proper performance appraisal process. The new PAS must be monitored very carefully at this critical stage to see that it is established and used as the General Assembly has instructed.

5. Internal oversight

46. The 1993 JIU report on accountability and oversight in the Secretariat found that existing United Nations internal oversight was fragmented and had serious weaknesses. The largest group, internal audit, was recognized as being understaffed and with too many entry-level posts, particularly in light of greatly-increased peace-keeping and humanitarian audit responsibilities. The small central evaluation unit was acknowledged as a "somewhat sickly child" of United Nations management. The central monitoring unit was bogged down in cumbersome output counting, and the management advisory group had an operational role much reduced from that originally intended.

47. The JIU recommended that a single, consolidated oversight unit be established, with much greater independence, more investigative work, and direct reporting to the General Assembly.[36] The Secretary-General did establish a transitional, consolidated office in late 1993, and in September 1994 the General Assembly established a new Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS)[37] headed by an Under-Secretary-General who assumed his post in November 1994.

48. The new OIOS is still establishing its role. It has issued its first reports to the General Assembly, which may total about a dozen a year in addition to its annual report. It faces resource challenges: the Inspectors noted in 1993 that the new office should have from 200 to 800 posts instead of the 90 originally assigned, based on $4 to $5 billion of annual United Nations expenditures and staffing ratios for similar public organizations. In fact, only eight posts were added in 1995, with an additional 11 net posts proposed for 1996-1997.[38]

49. In view of continuing tight resource constraints, the new OIOS will therefore have to concentrate on maximizing the skills and productivity of its existing staff resources. The 1993 JIU report noted that the unit would need new skills such as trained investigators and up-to-date computer systems experts, especially to fulfill its new responsibilities to deal with "waste, fraud and abuse". In recognition of this need for a mix of new specialized skills and for independent operations, the Under-Secretary-General of OIOS has now been authorized to recruit staff directly for service with the Office rather than with the Secretariat as a whole, and to promote and to terminate them.[39]

50. The General Assembly established monitoring, internal audit, inspection and evaluation, investigation, and implementation of recommendations and reporting as the functions of OIOS.[40] The Office needs to develop the proper mix of these functions and to establish three other important relationships. First, while OIOS may advise and support programme managers in certain procedural areas, there is no longer a clear management improvement responsibility or management services unit in the United Nations Secretariat, which is a significant gap in the new accountability and responsibility system (see section C.4 following). Second, in establishing the internal oversight role of OIOS, the General Assembly also emphasized the need to respect the separate and distinct roles of external oversight mechanisms and to strengthen them: this process is evolving.[41] Third, the Secretariat is now adding and encouraging some other important new oversight resources, processes and transparency (as discussed in Chapter VI).

51. Most importantly, however, the work of the internal and the external oversight bodies should be enormously facilitated if and when the accountability and responsibility system

is properly implemented. Presently, great effort is required to determine what a particular unit or programme is doing through a vague and dated medium-term plan, an often-uninformative programme budget, weak monitoring and evaluation processes and data, and a lack of specific performance responsibilities and tasks for Secretariat units and staff. The new system should provide much greater clarity of objectives and work plans (see the sections on performance management and accountability for accountability which follow). These detailed objectives and workplans should help management, internal and external oversight units, and governing bodies to much more readily assess the progress, results and problems encountered in United Nations programmes at all levels.

6. Management information systems

52. A 1985 JIU report on management issues in computer use found that United Nations computer systems development had fallen far behind other agencies of the System. The United Nations efforts were not responsive or well-controlled, and could not attain realizable management improvements and cost savings. JIU recommended urgent action to ensure clear-cut United Nations systems development, staffing, and services.[42]

53. The Secretariat moved very slowly, however, until a Secretariat evaluation for CPC confirmed JIU's findings.[43] In late 1987 the Secretary-General acknowledged that the United Nations had an uncoordinated set of 22 computerized administrative systems, that there was "widespread dissatisfaction" with their outdated character, and that this situation had "severe repercussions" in extensive extra costs, fragmentation, and lack of responsiveness throughout the Organization. He proposed the establishment of an Integrated Management Information System (IMIS).[44]

54. The IMIS moved forward with painful slowness for years, due primarily to management indecision and a lack of proper support to the contractor (resulting in significant cost overruns and an expected final total cost of some $76 million, including $3 million for maintenance expenditures). Meanwhile, the antiquated existing systems have continued to provide inaccurate, tardy, inconsistent, and inadequate financial and personnel data, which could rarely be used by managers in daily operations. Recently, however, with stronger leadership and following a "complete reprogramming and rebudgeting exercise" and a review by the Board of Auditors, IMIS may now be ready to reach a "critical mass" of implementation, and is due for completion by the end of 1997.[45]

55. At Headquarters in New York, basic human resources and some other elements of the IMIS were implemented in September 1993 and staff entitlements in April 1995. Major financial and other applications are to be implemented between the end of 1995 and mid-1996. IMIS will not be implemented at offices away from Headquarters until later, but technical and data surveys have been completed at all duty stations. IMIS has already had some significant impacts: for instance, it was initially found that some 1,500 of the 7,400 staff presently covered (many on short-term contracts) did not have valid contracts, a number now reduced to less than 200. Also, the technical quality and cost savings potential of IMIS are illustrated by the fact that the International Labour Organization and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) are also now implementing the first "releases" of IMIS.

56. The Inspector was impressed by the potential of some of the data already being produced by IMIS to improve the past chaotic information provided to managers on human resource matters, and to greatly advance the transparency and accountability called for by the General Assembly. The complexity of the system must also be acknowledged: for instance, it presently covers 68 duty stations and will include128 different currencies. The key phase will come in November 1995, when the new systems for accounting, procurement, travel, and property management will run in parallel with the old system before full implementation, which is scheduled for early 1996.

57. Even if IMIS is fully implemented by the end of 1997, it must be remembered that its basic function is to promote the electronic integration of offices performing administrative tasks. The important step of establishing a true programme management information system still remains for the future: technically, it can be added to the IMIS. Just as importantly, the inadequate early implementation of the IMIS resulted in extensive workflow analysis which, however, largely computerized the existing workflow patterns. The Inspector believes that it is very important that future management improvement work, and followup work to the IMIS, emphasize strong and systematic workflow analysis to question, reassess and streamline workflow processes throughout the Secretariat.

C. Progress required

58. While some progress has been made in the six major areas described above, there are four other areas where little has yet happened and much remains to be done. These critical elements must be dealt with if the overall "transparent and effective system of accountability and responsibility" is indeed to be established in the United Nations. Any weak link jeopardizes the entire chain of actions, and in each area the Secretariat and intergovernmental bodies need to clarify the work to be done, mobilize the necessary resources, establish accountability, and then act.

1. Policy guidance and instructions

59. The "Group of 18" experts emphasized in 1986 that efficient management of the staff should rest upon clear, coherent and transparent rules and regulations.[46] For its part, the 1994 report of the Secretary-General on the new system of accountability and responsibility emphasized that (a) the responsibilities of the Secretariat and its staff at all levels must be clearly defined, and (b) the legislative norms to which all staff are accountable must be clear, unambiguous, coherent, comprehensible, duly promulgated and available to both the supervisors and those supervised.[47]

60. The Secretary-General's report stated that a review already underway had demonstrated the need to revise United Nations rule-making practices and procedures so that the legislative hierarchy is consistently observed and complied with, norms and administrative issuances are regularly updated, and all issuances are published and

disseminated to facilitate easy reference. It then identified a long list of specific guidance revisions required:

(a) a revised text of the Financial Regulations and Rules, especially concerning emergency situations and improved delegation of authority;

(b) a review of the Regulations and Rules governing programme planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation;

(c) a review of the procurement process and related management issues;

(d) a comprehensive review of the Staff Regulations and Rules to create a more coherent, simplified and easily updated body of guidance;

(e) a new format for, and rewrite of, the Organization Manual;

(f) an organization chart for the Secretariat;

(g) review and revision of the Secretary-General's bulletins in the ST/SGB/Organization series;

(h) preparation of a formal United Nations code of conduct, followed by a re-examination to identify particularly important ethical guidelines;

(i) a review of the existing system of delegation of authority, with particular attention to field operations, internal controls, and waste, fraud and abuse matters;

(j) a review of guidelines for administrative actions affecting careers and development of a system of rewards and sanctions;

(k) a report on a revised administration of justice system; and

(l) a review to simplify and clarify United Nations legislative instruments, streamline existing subsidiary legislation, and revise it to create a straightforward and coherent body of legislative norms.

61. Once all documents describing the organizational and statutory framework have been identified, they would be prepared and issued in an easily accessible format. This would also include

(a) the Personnel Manual and related procedural manuals;

(b) the Financial Manual and related procedural manuals; and

(c) a field administration handbook.[48]

62. The Inspector believes that this is a solid set of guidance efforts, and that its timely completion is essential to establish the new accountability and responsibility system

throughout the Secretariat. However, when he asked about the status of these efforts in New York in mid-1995, the responses were usually quite vague. Only the procurement effort is completed (in a quite significant way, as discussed subsequently), and the administration of justice proposals have been issued (see section C.3 below). All the other items seem to be somewhere along the way to implementation, with completion dates and preparation responsibilities generally indeterminate.

63. Two of these guidance and authority elements are particularly important. First, although the Secretariat Organization Manual has been established for decades, it "disappeared" in the midst of the restructurings of recent years, to the great dissatisfaction of Member States. The Organization Manual is a basic management tool. It provides uniform descriptions of the functions, responsibilities and structures of departments and offices financed fully or partly by the regular budget. It also clearly links units with their mandated tasks, based on staffing tables, job descriptions, organizational charts, and clear unit descriptions.

64. The Organization Manual serves above all as a transparent, coherent document which allows Member States and Secretariat management to determine missions, responsibilities, work programmes, and harmonized structures of the Secretariat. The long-overdue revision of most of the Manual is targeted for completion by December 1995.[49] As of August 1995, however, only eight of 25 departments or offices had completed their updated sections. It is extremely important that the Manual be completed as soon as possible, and kept up to date in the future, as a cornerstone of the new accountability and responsibility system.

65. Second, the new system places great importance on overcoming the deficiencies of the heavily centralized administrative system of the United Nations, on delegating authority to make daily operations Secretariat-wide as expeditious and effective as possible, and on properly balancing administrative decentralization with central control, monitoring and coordination. The Secretariat established a working group in 1994 to review delegation issues at Headquarters and then study the situation in other offices. Subsequently, progress has been made as follows in the major management areas.

(a) The Secretariat has stressed the urgency of first delegating authority to field operations, including peace-keeping,[50] as part of a response to the General Assembly's concerns about operational weaknesses in this area. Two 1994 reports by the Secretary-General explored changes needed for more effective management of peace-keeping operations.[51]

(b) DAM issued detailed guidance to offices in Geneva and Vienna in March 1995 on existing and new delegations of authority to rationalize, integrate, and improve human resources management, services, and responsiveness in these duty stations. OHRM salary survey teams have worked with human resources staff at the non-New York duty stations, and OHRM is preparing training and other activities for the other duty stations through support team clusters in New York.

(c) Although the IMIS will not be installed at other duty stations until later, IMIS technical and data survey teams have already done a considerable amount of preparatory work at the other duty stations, as already noted.

(d) The area in which the most work remains to be done is financial management. In two 1994 reports Member States and an intergovernmental working group stressed the need to improve and strengthen United Nations financial administration and disciplinary rules, procedures, and measures.[52] The 1994 report of the Secretary-General on the new accountability and responsibility system stated that the Secretariat, based on the findings of the above 1994 working group on delegation, would review internal controls and submit revised regulations for consideration by the General Assembly at its fiftieth session.[53]

66. Ensuring that United Nations managers in duty stations around the world can respond flexibly and creatively to rapidly changing local situations and operations, while maintaining basic central control and oversight will be an enormous challenge. Establishing clear and complete guidance is obviously essential to the successful decentralization of functions and delegation of authority. This guidance must be developed and disseminated as soon as possible.

2. Performance management

67. The 1995 JIU system-wide report on accountability, management improvement, and oversight highlighted the importance of performance management. The International Civil Service Commission (ICSC), defines performance management as "the related issues of how to evaluate/measure a staff member's performance accurately and objectively, and how to use that information to enhance individual and organizational performance." The ICSC (which updated its performance appraisal principles and guidelines in 1994[54]) concluded that a performance-related management culture should include greater transparency and understanding of the systems among staff, firmer insistence on objective and rigorous appraisal of performance, and adding competencies (necessary knowledge, skill and ability standards needed in job groups) to task-based performance schemes.[55]

68. The Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (CCAQ) of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) has also launched an initiative, based on the ICSC guidelines, to promote more rigorous systems of performance review for managers throughout the United Nations system and to help institute a "performance management culture".[56] The CCAQ and ACC dialogue agrees that performance management must lead to institutional cultures where effective performance, efficiency, and accountability are prized objectives. Work is continuing on prototype systems, guidelines, and frameworks to support the efforts already under way in some organizations.

69. The organization that has progressed furthest in this area, UNDP, has stressed the importance of a framework to incorporate all the accountability and oversight elements. As identified by a UNDP task force, the framework and linkage involves:

(a) goals and objectives for obtaining the organization's vision, presented as a Strategic Plan;

(b) biennial management objectives for major units to operationalize this Strategic Plan;

(c) a biennial budget and annual Unit Work Plans based on the management objectives; and

(d) Individual Work Plans, based on the Unit Work Plans, which would be included in Staff Performance Plans, as part of the human resources management process.

70. The United Nations Secretariat already has the first two-and-one-half of these four framework elements. The revised and hopefully streamlined medium-term plans and programme budgets, as discussed in section B.2, should provide the necessary longer-term strategic guidance. In addition, senior managers are now required to provide concise plans every six months to the Secretary-General, which elaborate specific departmental and office objectives, anticipated obstacles, ways to overcome them, and some assessment of problems or corrective actions arising from preceding plans. Further, senior managers are required to prepare an annual statement of their responsibility, authority and accountability, to help clarify their particular positions, constraints, and performance obligations.

71. These frameworks are important. However, they are too general to provide the clear and specific objectives, responsibility for programme delivery, and management mechanism which the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to include in the new system of accountability and responsibility. The essential performance and results level is the unit work plans (and individual work plans) which, as in UNDP, are to be established throughout the Secretariat.

72. Workshops on implementation strategies were held for senior staff in 1994, and are planned in 1995 for all staff responsible for outputs.[57] The guidance and training for the PAS include an emphasis on goal-based work plans for departments/divisions and individual staff members. These plans turn the objectives of the medium-term plan and programme budget into more concrete goal-based work plans. The work plans then establish measurement indicators reflecting quality, quantity, cost and timeliness.

73. The Inspector believes that these unit work plans are the pivotal new step which will allow the Secretariat to establish the responsibilities, deadlines, and specific actions required to successfully implement General Assembly resolution 48/218 A.[58] Given the weakness of existing monitoring and evaluation processes, and failed efforts in the past to establish and maintain unit work programmes, these new unit work plans can finally provide the desired "clear responsibility for programme delivery" which has been missing for so long. They can also contribute significantly to better programme oversight and reporting to intergovernmental bodies, as discussed in the concluding section of this Chapter and in Chapter VI.

74. Two methodological points must be made. First, the unit work plans which are included in the PAS training already envision (and very definitely should include) time-limited objectives, stating clearly what will be done and when, as discussed in the rest of this report. Second, the General Assembly specifically called for "performance indicators" to be included. However, (a) the development of meaningful performance indicators is difficult under any conditions, (b) the Secretariat has tried and failed to develop them in the past, and (c) it continues to rely on a "do it yourself" approach by untrained managers and staff which raises doubts about ultimate success. The Inspector certainly encourages the pursuit and specification of meaningful performance indicators throughout the Secretariat. He believes, however, that the "who, what, and when" approach of systematic unit work plans and time-limited objectives throughout the Secretariat is the top priority step that must first be taken to establish effective performance management in the United Nations.

3. Administration of justice

75. The United Nations has long had an administration of justice system for staff grievances, appeals, and disciplinary procedures. During the late 1980s several reports (including one by the JIU) cited widespread dissatisfaction with this process.[59] The system is very ponderous and complex, painfully slow in settling cases, and quite expensive in the staff resources, emotions, and time that it consumes.

76. In April 1993 the General Assembly could only "regret" that yet another report it had recommended on this topic in 1990 had not been submitted. The Assembly stressed the importance of a "just, transparent, simple, impartial and efficient system of internal justice" and requested the Secretary-General to make a comprehensive review, including costs of the system, to submit to the Assembly no later than 1994.[60]

77. The Secretary-General's 1994 report on the new system of accountability and responsibility noted that a task force had agreed on the need to overhaul and streamline the many policies, regulations, rules and administrative issuances concerning the administration of justice.[61] In a series of reports in November 1994 and March and June 1995, the Secretary-General proposed major reforms in the internal system of justice.[62]

78. The Secretary-General observed that the existing internal justice process was established years ago for a few thousand staff members and only a few cases a year. Now the system covers some 14,800 staff and a much heavier workload, such as some 108 appeals annually. The new system will seek much more informal resolution of disputes, more professional and expeditious appeal and disciplinary machinery, and a much simpler and cost-effective justice system overall.

79. This system is symptomatic of the many old rules and regulations encumbering the Secretariat as it attempts to cope with the rapid changes and "new world" of the 1990s, all of which need urgently to be revised (as already discussed in section C.I above). The administration of justice system, however, is of particular importance. The then Under-Secretary-General of DAM stated in 1987 that "something had gone very wrong" with the internal justice system, which, if it did not properly defend against mounting feelings of arbitrariness and discrimination, could undermine staff morale and "finally destroy an international organization however high its ideals and purposes."[63]

80. A further eight years of this defective system have only increased staff frustration and mistrust, and created very negative attitudes and skepticism which now threaten implementation of the new responsibility and accountability system. To create the management culture and performance-oriented organization that the United Nations seeks, it is very important that the new "just, transparent, simple, impartial and efficient system of internal justice" be established and applied as quickly as possible.

4. Management improvement

81. An important source of creativity and innovation in any organization is the knowledge, insights, and ideas of staff. The new JIU report on accountability, management

improvement, and oversight found that many organizations in the United Nations system (but not the United Nations Secretariat) have management improvement or management services units, or are applying total quality management, quality circle, team development, organizational development, cost-reduction and other efforts, which seek to tap staff creativity and experience to systematically improve operations and cut waste.[64]

82. The General Assembly concluded in 1976 that it was essential to have an effective and continuing management improvement programme. It called on the Secretary-General to strengthen the functions of the Administrative Management Service through reports on management problems, action on its recommendations, high-quality staffing, and annual reporting to ACABQ on its recommendations and actions taken.[65] The unit, subsequently renamed the Management Advisory Service (MAS), underwent many organizational reshufflings and a general decline. In 1993 it was shifted to what became the OIOS and then was phased out.

83. It is unfortunate that as the United Nations works to establish a management culture and new innovative approaches, it has no organization-wide management improvement programme and no management analysis staff left in DAM. The new OIOS, as already discussed, has a heavy oversight workload and responsibility, but a very limited management improvement role. The Secretariat has tried some participative management improvement programmes in the past, but they have faded away.[66] Some outside management consultants are now being very usefully employed, but this is only a partial response. The JIU has also suggested more external management reviews and published reports thereon by Member States and international consultants, which is occurring in many other United Nations system organizations[67] (see also Chapter VI).

84. In addition, however, many other organizations in the System have recently expanded their modest management development activities, advisory units, and/or improvement programmes.[68] The United Nations needs these programmes as well. Three former MAS staff members, one Professional and two General Service, were returned from OIOS to DAM in late 1994. They comprise a new Organization Management Unit, which works on revising the Organization Manual, forms control, and administrative issuances. However, these few staff are not really adequate either for these important continuing responsibilities or to carry out other former MAS functions.

85. The General Assembly expressed its conviction in 1976 that "an effective and continuing management improvement programme is essential", and "requires a competent central internal machinery" with the necessary mandate, senior management support, and resources to enhance management improvement efforts.[69] In a 1991 review of MAS, the JIU urged that it be revitalized to aid in managerial analysis and problem-solving. developing productivity standards, streamlining operations, determining staffing requirements, and enhancing organizational and administrative analysis and review.[70] Since the Secretariat will be stressing the analysis of redundancies, overlap, and duplication more and more in the future (see Chapter IV), an MAS-type unit is still clearly needed. The lack of such a unit is a disturbing "hole" in the new system of accountability and responsibility.

D. Accountability for accountability

"We were like a dinosaur: they'd whack us on the tail, and three weeks later we'd feel it in our brain."

- *recent comment by an executive of a once-dominant multinational corporation, whose "smug, massive" bureaucracy was forced into a major restructuring and downsizing after being overtaken by its more dynamic competitors*

86. The Inspector believes that the preceding ten areas of action represent very encouraging steps toward establishment of the new transparent and effective system of accountability and responsibility which the General Assembly has called for. However, many key implementation steps remain to be taken. In particular, the Inspector recommends two additional elements which are essential to make the new system function properly: a clearly-identifiable and accountable focal point for the entire effort, and a firm emphasis on time-limited objectives for secretariat work.

87. As noted in the introduction, the General Assembly called on the Secretary-General in 1993 "to provide adequate resources and identify clearly units, at appropriate levels, for the implementation of all programmes and activities."[71] While the Secretary-General and the Under-Secretary General for Administration and Management are ultimately responsible for installing the new system of accountability and responsibility, they can hardly give day-to-day attention to this enormous effort. At present, no one has this responsibility and, particularly in areas such as policy guidance and information (C.1) above, implementation actions are unclear and disorganized.

88. In its 1995 report on accountability, management improvement, and oversight, the Inspectors noted strategic planning as the first of four elements essential to enable System organizations to respond to constantly changing missions, responsibilities, and conditions. (The other three areas are performance management, a framework of work plans, and more comprehensive programme performance assessment). While often used in modern business, strategic planning is a relatively recent innovation in public sector organizations. It emphasizes responsiveness, high-quality services, more creative use of staff and an ongoing planning process. Strategic plans attempt to state as clearly as possible what an organization is, what it does, and why it does it, and to develop, adjust, and update strategies to achieve the related goals and objectives.[72]

89. The JIU system-wide survey found a rapid increase in the use of strategic planning by the organizations. The best examples are the Office of Evaluation and Strategic Planning of UNDP, the Strategy, Policy and Planning Office of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), and the Strategic Planning and Policy Unit of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). However, many other United Nations entities and specialized agencies are also now developing new programmes to strengthen their strategic direction, management change processes, and management systems in an integrated and continuing way.[73]

90. In the above report, the Inspectors recommended that each organization establish a single focal point unit under its executive head dedicated to strategic planning, performance management, and maximally effective accountability and management oversight. The unit should integrate and catalyze managerial tasks and responsibilities in order to strengthen organizational flexibility and responsiveness, that is, to manage change.

91. The United Nations must have such a focal point unit if it is to properly implement and use the "transparent and effective system of accountability and responsibility" required by the General Assembly, and effectively pull together the many loose strands summarized in this Chapter. An organization as large as the United Nations, with more than 14,000 staff worldwide and some $4 to $6 billion in annual expenditures, cannot afford to implement the most complex and far-reaching management changes in its history without an alert and fully-functioning central "brain." To return to the doomed dinosaur analogy that began this section, the United Nations must be constantly alert to "smacks" on its tail, or other potential important changes and challenges, if it is to be an evolutionary success.

92. Other considerations also argue for a focal point unit. First, as already noted, the General Assembly called on the Secretary-General in 1993 "to provide adequate resources and identify clearly units" for the implementation of all programmes and activities.[74] The complex "management reform" of the Secretariat is certainly a priority restructuring action which deserves specified, dedicated resources, staff and functions. Second, establishment of the new OHRM strategic planning unit endorses this approach, but such strategic thinking should certainly not be confined just to human resources management. Third, the Secretary-General's 1994 report on the new system of accountability and responsibility stressed that "systematic control of the interrelated processes" would provide "the key to the success" of achieving the goals of the new system (but it provided only a general flow-chart in response).[75]

93. The Inspector therefore recommends, as a matter of urgency, that the Secretary-General establish a focal point unit dedicated to integrated strategic planning and monitoring and stimulation of the management of change: that is, the people accountable for accountability. The unit might be located directly under the Secretary-General, or in DAM under the Under-Secretary-General. It would benefit greatly from, but would provide an essential supplement and broadening to, the work of the new strategic planning unit in OHRM. It could play an important role in preparing analyses and reports for the Secretary-General.

94. Above all, however, this unit must keep continually up-to-date on all matters concerning United Nations strategic planning, the long-term implementation and enhancement of the new accountability system, and responsiveness to the constantly changing environment. It should also aid the Secretary-General and the General Assembly by coordinating, adjusting, and generating ongoing medium-term plans, other strategic proposals to governing bodies, and further management improvement initiatives.

95. In the specific management realm which is the topic of this report, the new unit should provide the single focal point in the United Nations Secretariat for integrated management and management development which has always been lacking. To help the unit identify major management trends, problems, and opportunities, it should be knowledgeable about the status of such key elements as:

- articulating clearer objectives in planning and programming documents;
- priority-setting efforts;
- enhancement of internal controls and other important policy guidance;
- monitoring of programme implementation;
- performance management issues;
- development and use of workload analyses and statistics;
- evolving management training and improvement programmes;
- internal and external review findings and follow-up;
- guidelines for and changes in organizational structures;
- human resources projections and staff management issues;
- new uses of information technology; and
- criteria for and changes in management of posts.

96. Second, the discussion in this Chapter has stressed the past problems of establishing a firm results orientation in United Nations planning and programming. Evaluation and followup have always been the "sickly children" of United Nations management, and the risks are high that this situation will continue. Almost two decades ago, the pattern of vague United Nations objectives, combined with feeble efforts at subsequent assessment of results, was already becoming evident. A 1978 JIU report on programming and evaluation suggested, above all, adoption of a system of **time-limited objectives** to provide operational transparency and accountability.[76]

97. The JIU recommendation was vaguely pursued and gradually faded away. Now, however, another 17 years of feeble performance results, and the General Assembly's insistence on establishing the new, transparent and effective, accountability and responsibility system make this idea relevant once again. Even better, there is a direct, clear, and current example of how to use this approach. In December 1994 the Secretariat issued a critical study prepared by a high-level group of external procurement experts group calling for "radical changes in the culture, procedures, and practices" of United Nations procurement and detailing corrective actions needed (the report release is itself a most welcome indication of new "transparency" in United Nations operations).[77]

98. In June 1995, the Secretary-General presented a plan of action for procurement reform in response to the expert study, with a full report to follow later. His report acknowledges the findings of excessive bureaucracy, lack of delegation of authority, limited empowerment of staff, inflexible regulations, and poor management and leadership. Following the standard discussion of actions under way, the report presents a procurement plan of action and a schedule. An annex to the report listed 36 recommendations made, and provided specific target completion dates for each one (except for eight that were still "under consideration") by month and year between July 1995 and August 1996, and further states whether or not action has already begun.[78]

99. The Inspector recommends that this clear and straightforward statement of actions to be taken, and the associated target dates - time-limited objectives - be applied to all significant objectives, activities and tasks in unit work plans (and the associated individual work plans) throughout the United Nations Secretariat. (Where units or subunits implement continuous activities with repetitive outputs, the work plans should emphasize the workload analysis and standards which the General Assembly has repeatedly cited as being of "crucial importance",[79] i.e. to steadily, over time, improve productivity, increase quality, reduce errors, cut processing time, and/or delete any backlogs. Even more broadly, units

should regularly consider whether the activity should be done differently, or by someone else, or not at all relative to other priority needs).

100. To ensure that these time-limited objectives are consistently recognized and applied as basic accountability measures for programme performance, they should be included in all reports to intergovernmental bodies on the status and progress of individual programmes and improvement activities. In addition, they should become a required element for examination by internal and external oversight units whenever they review the operations and results of a programme or a unit's operations.

101. Only by establishing and requiring unit work plans with specific objectives, tasks and activities, and time targets for completion can the General Assembly's call for "clear responsibility for programme delivery" be answered, and the "mechanism ensuring that programme managers are accountable for...effective management" and the associated credibility and transparency finally be provided.

102. As a clear example of the need for this approach, the new strategic planning unit should also have a unit work plan and coordinate the new system of accountability and responsibility through time-limited objectives, as is being done for the procurement reforms. At present, the many major elements of the new system of accountability and responsibility are "under implementation", but in a very unclear way. The new office should inform the Secretary-General and the General Assembly of progress being made and time targets, for instance, in two very important accountability areas where progress is presently uncertain and close monitoring is urgently needed to ensure overall system success:

(a) the units responsible for each of the various new or revised policy guidance activities identified in section C.I of this chapter, and when the policy guidance they are preparing will be completed; and

(b) a schedule to establish that all units throughout the Secretariat have begun, or when they will (soon and specifically) begin, their provisional year of operation under the new performance appraisal system, as discussed in sections B.4 and C.2.

III. WHO ARE THE MANAGERS?

103. The 1994 report of the Secretary-General on the new system of accountability and responsibility begins with careful definitions of responsibility, authority, and accountability. Unfortunately, it nowhere defines the "programme managers" who are specifically identified by General Assembly resolution 48/218 as playing a critical role in this new system. The report, nevertheless, refers frequently to these "managers" and "programme managers", as well as to heads of departments, offices, and main organizational units; directors; senior managers; senior managerial staff; executive officers; supervisors; and "staff responsible for identifiable outputs".[80]

104. Other sources are not much help. A report on the new medium-term plan format proposes that the United Nations should have 24 programmes, and also mentions that there are currently 246 subprogrammes, thus hinting at a rough range of the number of "programme managers."[81] The Inspector was unable, however, to obtain a definition of "programme managers" from DAM officials in New York, and his last hope - the OHRM staff tasked with training these "programme managers" - said that they are in fact only training by grade level, i.e. starting with senior officials, then Directors, then senior Professional staff, and so on down.

105. In addition to uncertainty about the definition and number of United Nations programme managers, there appear to be several quite different types of United Nations "managers." Some officials manage complex, dangerous, unstable, large-scale emergency field programmes. Others manage much smaller-scale document preparation and servicing for sessions of an intergovernmental body. Still others are in the "Executive Offices" and "Programme Support Units" spread throughout the Secretariat departments and offices. "Special representatives" of the Secretary-General may have significant managerial responsibilities, and the staff responsible for management systems also exercise some significant Secretariat-wide staff management responsibilities as well. Finally, there are the fundamental levels of senior or executive managers, managers, and supervisors to sort out.

106. It may be that "United Nations managers" have never been well-defined, thereby reflecting the low priority given to this staff category in the past. One of the most often-cited of all JIU reports, on personnel problems in 1971, examined the "crisis of modernization" which the Secretariat faced: rapid growth in staff size, much more complex and diverse work tasks, difficulties of recruitment, and confusions about the skills and reform actions the Secretariat needed in technical management fields.[82] Unfortunately, this 24-year old analysis sounds uncomfortably like the current situation.

107. The Inspector certainly hopes that OHRM and its new human resources planning unit will devote much more careful attention to defining, identifying, selecting, and developing the managers of the Secretariat. Meanwhile, there are at least a few recent reports, much requested by the General Assembly and rather grudgingly provided by the Secretariat, which shed at least some light on the situation.

(a) In August 1994 the Secretary-General reported, as the General Assembly had requested several times since 1991, on procedures and norms for the creation, suppression, reclassification, conversion and redeployment of regular budget posts (the significantly different procedures for extrabudgetary posts were excluded).[83]

(b) In December 1994, the Secretary-General presented a follow-up report, which the General Assembly had requested, to clarify the position of and establish guidelines for the special representatives, special envoys, and other high-level staff he had appointed. The Assembly requested the Secretary-General to ensure that the number of these people is minimized, and that he more clearly define and streamline their functions and responsibilities, avoid any possible duplication, and ensure full compliance with current financial and budgetary procedures.[84]

(c) In response to the General Assembly's concern about the possible adverse effects of the use of retirees on recruitment and promotion in the Secretariat, the Secretariat prepared detailed information on retiree use in June 1995.[85] The General Assembly then requested the Secretary-General to develop a comprehensive policy on the use of retirees, including appropriate internal controls. The Secretariat is issuing new guidance on remuneration limits and will prepare a detailed report on the use of retired staff for the fifty-first session of the Assembly.

108. Meanwhile, there appear to be three broad categories of quality among the vague group of "programme managers" in the United Nations Secretariat. First, there are managers who would be successful in almost any public or private organization. Either these people entered the United Nations with good experience and training in modern management, or they are in that happy position of being "natural managers" (see below). These good managers need to be recognized, encouraged, rewarded, and emulated.

109. A second group, quite probably the largest, is composed of unprepared managers. One of the few specific, recent analyses of the United Nations management culture (or its lack) was made in 1993 to help establish the new management training programme. Its most distinctive finding, relative to other organizations, was the frequency with which untrained people were placed in managerial positions in the United Nations Secretariat. A number of the managers interviewed were "entirely unfamiliar" with contemporary management experience, such as principles of organizational development, change management, or the quality management movement. The study found widespread support among Secretariat officials for major changes in United Nations management, but emphasized that, to be effective, management training must be accompanied by supporting changes in incentives, systems and procedures (which the new accountability and responsibility system will hopefully now provide).

110. Management has been most simply defined as "getting things done through people". Thus, management combines a firm focus on performance and results with the skills required to lead and deal effectively with people. Increasingly, it is realized that a good manager must possess, or develop, certain critical competencies. Recent ICSC and CCAQ reports have discussed these competencies, and the importance of strengthening management in the organizations of the United Nations system by instituting a performance management culture. CCAQ has proposed, for continuing discussion, the following list of personal competencies on which the performance of System managers might be evaluated:

(a) integrity and international outlook;
(b) communication;
(c) leadership;
(d) analysis and problem-solving;
(e) negotiating, persuading, influencing;

(f) adaptability, flexibility, maturity;
(g) achievement orientation;
(h) human resources management.

111. The new management training programme of the Secretariat places considerable emphasis on building such skills among United Nations managers. Hopefully, this training will gradually enable many more Secretariat managers to exercise their functions well, although it is proceeding slowly because of funding limitations.

112. The various traits and skills outlined above make it clear that the job of a good manager, when properly conducted, is a very demanding and responsible one. He or she must demonstrate creativity and foresight; continually motivate, interact with, and support staff, and exercise judgement on a complex and changing mix of operational matters in the broader context of larger organizational programmes and objectives. Far from being a timid, "by the book" administrator content with applying rules and established procedures, and issuing orders to a distant staff from behind closed doors, the good manager must lead by example, with integrity, hard work, and a willingness to consistently consider and apply new approaches to produce results and attain programme objectives in a more effective way.

113. This contrast between dynamic managerial leadership and narrow administration leads to the third category of United Nations programme managers: bad ones. The 1993 Secretariat consultant study noted above summarized very serious basic problems in the existing management culture of the United Nations (which are confirmed by other analyses). These problems in the management culture arise from:

(a) a United Nations "board of directors" with 185 members and sensitive, competing, and even conflicting views, whose legislative activities are far more influential and pervasive than in typical national governments or even other international organizations, and which constrain the Secretary-General in his function as "chief administrative officer" (see further discussion in Chapter VI);

(b) an organizational culture that increasingly values control over facilitation, "process" over outcomes, hierarchy over collaboration, and personal power over collective purpose, all in a highly sensitive multicultural context;

(c) complex and cumbersome managerial systems and controls which limit managers' discretion but nevertheless permit abuses of authority;

(d) the perception that management and administration are of lesser worth than "substantive" work;

(e) the very broad span of control across the top of the complex Secretariat and often poor communication (1) among managers, (2) up and down the hierarchy, and (3) among units, all of which discourage effective consultation and control;

(f) a general confusion about the Organization's goals and objectives, not clarified at all by the vast amounts of time managers must spend on budgeting issues;

(g) a lack of the clearly understood standards and measurements required to establish accountability for unit, managerial, and staff performance;

(h) valuing staff rights over the needs of the Organization, which creates rules, procedures and practices that subvert managers' ability to lead;

(i) bending hiring and promotion rules to allow personal and political objectives to supercede those of the Organization.

(j) financial and budgetary procedures so complex and cumbersome that following them often produces untimely and almost-useless work;

(k) controlling offices more concerned with preventing failure than with encouraging success or improving systems to make them better serve their users and the Organization.

114. The new system of accountability and responsibility called for by the General Assembly and being developed by the Secretariat is now addressing many of these very serious problems. But they serve as a strong reminder of the difficulty of the major management change process now under way. The climate of disorder and indiscipline they reflect also certainly help to explain how the United Nations has developed too many bad managers.

115. Far from concentrating on programme performance, future strategy, and developing, supporting, and leading staff, these managers have adapted to, and often exploited, the disorganized and undisciplined managerial climate described above. They operated in a dictatorial and sovereign style, insisting on their right to delegate all assignments with no personal involvement themselves, to interpret the rules as they saw fit, and in too many cases to treat staff distantly, capriciously, and abusively. They prided themselves on their ability to "get things done" administratively by backstage maneuvering to circumvent the cumbersome web of controls and procedures, but had little interest in results or the fulfillment of objectives. And although these managers were found on up to Director levels and above, their preoccupations were much more with the routine administrative activities, rather than with the dynamism, creativity, foresight, and leadership which good managers must display.

116. The "supernumeraries" identified - and even actually interviewed - by the international news media a few years ago (senior Secretariat officials on full pay but told to "stay at home") have now hopefully been eliminated from the Secretariat. One also hopes the "sovereign manager" mentality is fading away. However, the Inspector does know of a relatively recent situation in which a professional staff member complained to a senior administrative assistant about their new Director's almost total lack of involvement in "his" unit's work, and she responded, with earnest disbelief, "But Directors are <u>not supposed to do any work</u>."

117. The current Under-Secretary-General of DAM recently observed that he could not forget the "tremendous burst of applause" at a 1995 meeting he had with staff in Geneva when a staff member denounced the low quality of management. He cited this incident as a "defining moment" in his relationship with the United Nations, and recognized the right of staff to good leadership and his obligation to give it to them.[86] The Inspector would only add that many people among the United Nations leadership, staff, Member State delegations, and external observers know well that poor management can lead to a sick organization and serious organizational decline. A vigorous, results-oriented management culture and strong moral leadership, on the other hand, can provide the dynamism and

healthy atmosphere which the United Nations must have if it is to prosper, evolve, and better meet the ambitious objectives established for it by Member States.

118. The process of developing and establishing a sound management culture in the Secretariat deserves much more careful analysis, attention, and transparency, now and in the future. Only three more items will be noted here.

119. First, the Inspector obtained data on the two key operational management positions in the Secretariat. In the almost-completed decade from January 1986 to mid-1995, there have been no less than nine Under-Secretaries-General or Officers-in-Charge of DAM (one of whom served twice). Their tenures varied from one to 27 months: the current incumbent, as of August 1995, was already the second-longest-serving person after only 16 months. The Assistant Secretaries-General for Human Resources Management have fared little better: there were only three from 1986 to late 1992, but four in the less than three years since (and the post was downgraded to Director D-2 during part of this period). Establishing a strong management culture in the Secretariat requires not only strong leaders and new processes but much greater stability and continuity of leadership if it is to be successful.

120. Second, the JIU observed in its 1993 report on Secretariat accountability and oversight that the existing Secretariat performance appraisal system provides no appraisal of the performance of senior Directors and policy-making officials of the Secretariat (D-2 level and above). They are pleased to note that General Assembly resolution 48/218 A specifies quite firmly that the new system shall include "Performance evaluation for all officials, including senior officials, with objectives and performance indicators."[87] Since there has been some foot-dragging on this idea from certain quarters of the Secretariat, the Inspector believes that ensuring that performance appraisal is applied to all staff when the new PAS system begins formally in 1996 will be very important to the effectiveness and credibility of the new management culture.

121. Third, there are many details which show the searching scrutiny which must continue to be given to all aspects of the management structure in the Secretariat. A few examples are:

(a) a new Secretariat training workshop is for "staff from the P-4 to D-2 levels who manage the report writing process"[88] (do P-2 and P-3 junior staff really do the actual writing, while P-4s, P-5s, D-1s, D-2s, and more senior officials all supervise them?)

(b) an international media advertisement by the Secretariat in 1994 sought Senior Procurement Managers to "manage a service or section of approximately 15 to 30 professional procurement officers"[89] (did this enormous span of control of 1:15 or 1:30 managers to staff contribute directly to the severe procurement management problems identified by the high-level-experts in late 1994 and referred to elsewhere in this report?);

(c) informal assessment in 1994 of a failed contract to develop new technical identification procedures for staff in New York, which cost (lost) almost a million dollars, included the comment that there were "too many signatures" to fix responsibility for this serious mistake (should not the emphasis be on ensuring that the "too many signatures" excuse will never occur again?); and

(d) in a grievous example of bureaucratic "red tape" run amuck, a Secretariat technical adviser detailed in a 1993 letter to a staff journal no less than 20 Secretariat signatures required to approve his field mission travel request, not counting various unknown initials added to the papers[90] (how often are such resource-wasting processes still occurring throughout the Secretariat?).

122. The Inspector has put this analysis of Secretariat management problems largely in the past tense, in the expectation that determined application of the new processes and reforms discussed in Chapter II will help put an end to bad management and facilitate good management. Hopefully, the various new systems, policy guidance, training, performance data, new code of staff conduct, increased oversight, and "performance culture" now being established will free up, encourage, and reward the good Secretariat managers; provide support and training to help unprepared managers function effectively; and lead to retraining, reassignment, or replacement of managers who perform poorly, thus applying the sanctions that the General Assembly firmly called for in its resolution 47/226 of 1993.[91]

123. In addition to the management training programme already begun, and the need in the future to recruit potential managers with greater managerial skills and competencies, the area of improved internal controls will be particularly important to improve United Nations management. The 1993 JIU report on accountability and oversight in the Secretariat discussed the General Assembly's many concerns about strengthening financial management control systems,[92] which were repeated in 1994 by Member States and the intergovernmental working group.[93] The 1995 JIU system-wide report on accountability found that continuous actions to improve and integrate internal control systems are increasingly recognized as a key to organizational effectiveness, and many System organizations are now revising their systems.[94] Steady improvement of United Nations internal controls will be essential to firmly establish the new management culture.

124. It must be repeated that changing to this new, dynamic, and participative management culture, after so many years of muddled administrative systems, will be a long and demanding process. Nevertheless, it is clear that a new management culture can greatly strengthen the United Nations and its future performance by determining much more systematically and transparently which "managers" are really <u>managers</u>. Unfortunately, another factor may exert severe pressure to achieve management and organizational change at a much more rapid and brutal pace: the "downsizing" issues discussed in the following Chapter.

IV. "DOWNSIZING" PRESSURES

125. The 1995 JIU report on United Nations system accountability, management improvement, and oversight processes noted that "downsizing" - the reduction of financial and staff resources of organizations - is rapidly becoming a major topic of strategic planning and organizational concern worldwide. Several System agencies experienced severe fund and staff reductions in the past. In the past few years, and especially in 1995, a growing number are reducing staff levels. The Inspectors have the impression, however, that most of the System organizations have not yet really prepared for this unpleasant eventuality, so that any sharp cutbacks which might suddenly emerge at any time could probably do much needless damage, not only to staff welfare and careers but to the organizations' programmes as well.

126. Global conditions increase the pressures. Employment prospects and job security, for "white collar" professionals and middle managers as well as other employees, are increasingly uncertain in a highly competitive world economy.[95] The very nature of work in large organizations is undergoing major changes.[96] Member States may become much more selective in deciding which international organizations they choose to support.[97] Development aid funds are at the lowest levels in 20 years.[98] In short, international and other organizations worldwide are currently being forced to sharply reduce or readjust their operations under these combined economic, policy, and financial pressures.[99]

127. The United Nations Secretariat is increasingly vulnerable to funding instability. In 1993, about 64 per cent of its roughly $4.6 billion in resources came from special assessments for peace-keeping and other missions, about 14 per cent from voluntary funds, and only 22 per cent from assessed regular budgets[100] (with most of this last category only paid very late, resulting in a perpetual cash-flow crisis). The Secretary-General's 1994 report on regular budget posts does show that a significant staff cut of more than 16 per cent occurred between the 1984-1985 and 1990-1991 biennia, primarily due to the recommendations of the "Group of 18" experts. Since then, however, the total Secretariat posts have crept back up again.[101]

128. The United Nations proposed programme budget for 1996-1997, as already noted, calls for a net reduction of 109 posts and a 2.4 per cent reduction ($109 million) in funds from the previous biennium. However, this falls well short of the pressures for bureaucratic reduction in many national budgets and bureaucracies (such as the 270,000 posts being eliminated in the comparator civil service, the United States of America.) Also, there has been talk in the press and elsewhere about the possibilities of 10, or 20, or even 30 per cent reductions in total United Nations staffing, and the elimination of entire United Nations units. While a sharp reduction of United Nations programmes and staff is extremely unpleasant to contemplate, it is important to do some contingency planning to minimize the impact if it should occur. The Secretariat also needs to review the hard-earned "lessons of experience" of the many other large organizations which have already gone through this very difficult process.[102]

129. Meanwhile, related actions are emerging in a number of areas. Although it is not considered a "downsizing" action, the General Assembly endorsed an "early separation programme" in 1994 to provide special compensation for staff, primarily at senior levels and aged 55-58, who "find themselves not meeting career aspirations" and wish to apply for early retirement or separation.[103] Given the ineffective performance evaluation system,

the selection will not be based on past performance, but on managers'judgements. The General Assembly approved this "enhanced attrition programme" in December 1994 for a several-year period.[104]

130. The costs of this new programme are tentatively estimated at $16 million for 1995, and perhaps $45 million overall. The Inspector agrees with the importance of "opening up" the management structure to new opportunities, approaches, and attitudes. However (a) some people feel that the compensation packages to be offered are too generous while others find them punitive, (b) the usual statement of programme budget implications on this new activity was not provided to the Fifth Committee (the funds will, however, come out of common staff costs already budgeted), and (c) further downsizing pressure may force still more separations. The Inspector believes that these circumstances might well require comprehensive reconsideration of the overall personnel and financial policies for, and management of, United Nations separations in the very near future.

131. Other elements of a basic "rethinking" of the deployment and use of scarce United Nations resources have also begun. The Secretary-General's 1994 report on the management of posts acknowledged that a present weakness is the absence of systematic review of posts by programme managers prior to requesting new ones.[105] The General Assembly has called specifically, and on several occasions, for careful workload standards to be applied, not only to justify all new Secretariat posts, but to continue any vacant posts as well.[106] There appears to be great potential for much more analysis and attentive oversight to ensure that all Secretariat posts are truly justified (see the last paragraph of this Chapter), particularly given the excessively bureaucratic reputation and multiple management levels which the Secretariat appears to have.

132. Similarly, the Secretary-General's report on the new system of accountability and responsibility acknowledged the "highly centralized administrative system" of the Secretariat. It further recognized that the plans to delegate authority and decentralize administrative operations (while maintaining a balance of central control) must include a reassessment of the relationship between the many executive officers, divisions of administration, and programme managers throughout the Secretariat.[107] This appears to be a very promising area for future Secretariat "streamlining."

133. Consideration is also beginning to be given to the overall staffing patterns which the United Nations requires in the 1990s and beyond. In 1993 the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to consider an "appropriate flexibility" between career and fixed-term appointments, and also endorsed a pilot project for mobility of administrative staff.[108] Staff mobility and quick response are becoming central operational issues as the United Nations system is more and more engaged in urgent, large-scale, but unpredictable field operations worldwide. In mid-1994, the Secretary-General also provisionally established a revised and more flexible "300 series" of staff appointments of limited duration to staff peace-keeping, peacemaking, and humanitarian missions, and provide replacement staff at Headquarters and other duty stations.[109]

134. These developments may be intimidating and even painful to staff, but they are also essential to assure Member States that funds are used wisely to provide the strongest possible programmes, and that the United Nations is constantly rethinking its operations and how best to perform them. The impetus for such changes comes not only from downsizing pressures, but also from the strong trend in many public and private organizations worldwide to "reengineer" their operations, i.e., to work comprehensively,

creatively, and continuously to establish simpler, leaner, and more productive processes to achieve the objectives of the organization.[110]

135. This trend is clearly and closely related to the new accountability and responsibility system now being installed in the United Nations, in four ways. First, the top managers, programme managers, and intergovernmental bodies (see Chapter VI) have the heavy responsibility of leading this effort, and ensuring that the United Nations can truly install a new management culture and continuously improve it to meet new challenges. The proposed strategic planning unit is a key element to help the Organization move toward more foresight and responsiveness.

136. Second, the Secretary-General has already stated that, at a time when national budgets are shrinking, the United Nations must become leaner, more focused and more efficient in its major tasks. In addition to efficiency savings already announced, added oversight and inspection functions and protection for "whistleblowers", and measures to recover funds lost through financial wrongdoing, the Secretary-General has established a longer-term task force on efficiency to examine redundancies, overlap, and duplication. Thus, even if there are no sudden downsizing "shocks", streamlining efforts in the Secretariat will continue.

137. Third, common support services (for conferences, facilities management, and general administration) represent almost 36 per cent of the United Nations regular budget.[111] There is a need to reduce support costs (a) as the IMIS and various streamlining processes are introduced, (b) in proportion to any reductions in other programmes that the administrative units support, and (c) to try insofar as possible to turn the old administrative "flab" into modern management "muscle."

138. Fourth and finally, staff at all levels are now inextricably involved in establishing the new management culture. As the Secretariat becomes firmly committed to (or forced toward) top-quality performance and demonstrated results, it becomes more and more essential to ensure that every single United Nations post provides demonstrable "value-added" performance to fulfill overall United Nations, and unit work plan, objectives. The General Assembly underscored this point when it stated in 1993 that the Secretary-General should review and develop the procedures for changes in posts, including workload analyses, and that "whenever a post becomes vacant, a proper programmatic/workload justification will be needed for its retention, abolition or redeployment."[112]

139. If a post has trivial functions, both the programme manager and staff member concerned are responsible (to the Organization and in their own interests) for insisting that the post be restructured to perform significant functions, or otherwise be deleted. Conversely, if a post already has significant functions and responsibilities, the high-quality performance of its duties by the staff member, supported by the manager, are essential to demonstrate that this post, this staff member, and this manager are key contributors to United Nations programme results. Hard work and top performance provide no guaranteed protection against downsizing and other intense competitive pressures on a large organization. They do, however, give the organization, and all its staff, the best possible chance to continue their work and to grow in productive new directions.

V. OTHER OFFICES: GENEVA

140. The United Nations was originally located only in New York and Geneva but now is worldwide, as is demonstrated by the 80 to 100 duty stations and 128 different currencies to be included in the new IMIS. The majority of United Nations staff and operations are now outside New York, in offices in Geneva, Vienna, and Nairobi; regional commission sites in Addis Ababa, Geneva, Santiago, Bangkok, and Amman; other small duty stations, and the many peace-keeping and humanitarian operations in the field.

141. The Secretary-General's 1994 report on accountability and responsibility acknowledged that the heavily centralized administrative system of the United Nations must be overcome. Not only has central control been tight, but it has even led to "delegation upwards" as discouraged managers at other stations respond by pushing decisions back up to New York. The non-New York duty stations have thus suffered for many years from rather severe and long-standing "managerial deprivation".

142. A 1982 JIU report on the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) found serious management problems, and recommended establishing a provisional management services unit in Addis Ababa. The Secretary-General declined, however, stating that this was handled by a management services unit in New York as a matter of principle.[113] Yet a 1995 report by the new OIOS called for "urgent" action to send a special team of Headquarters staff to Addis Ababa for several months to clear up serious administrative weaknesses and backlogs.[114] Unfortunately, this suggests not only that the ECA administrative problems continue on and on, but also that the United Nations is still thinking in terms of centralized solutions, rather than training and empowering managers at other duty stations.

143. The new accountability and responsibility system, however, intends to place great importance on delegating authority for daily operations to duty stations outside New York.[115] To obtain an idea of progress being made, the Inspector held informal discussions with senior and administrative officials of major units in Geneva: the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the Centre for Human Rights, the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), the Regional Office for Europe of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the Geneva office of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA). (The Inspector did not include the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) which, in the past few years, has undertaken considerable new management initiatives on its own, as detailed in the 1995 JIU system-wide accountability report).

144. Geneva was and is one of the largest conference centres in the world, and home to the above and many smaller United Nations units. A 1977 Secretariat review found poor services and support to "client units" in Geneva and recommended a strong management improvement programme, but this recommendation was never implemented. JIU found continuing management and support service problems in 1983, and also recommended in a 1985 report that "urgent action" be taken to provide strong management systems and services.[116] Once again, nothing happened: a 1993 JIU inquiry found that the sole management services officer post in Geneva had been abolished in 1989.

145. This situation appears, finally, to be changing in a number of encouraging ways, particularly because the organizations in Geneva are all developing their own managerial

capacities under the new system of accountability and responsibility. The organizations cited above noted progress in the following areas of the new system of accountability and responsibility in which they are presently participating.

(a) All the organizations are now preparing the six-month management plans to the Secretary-General, some already for several years and the others for the first time in 1995. These plans are being strengthened, by basing them on sub-unit management plans and by including some assessment of problems or corrective actions arising from preceding plans.

(b) The brief annual statements of senior managers' responsibility, authority, and accountability are being prepared, and are recognized as useful periodic exercises to help individual managers clarify their positions, constraints, and obligations.

(c) Most significantly, in most of the Geneva organizations there have been, and continue to be, actions to reinforce and build on the earlier senior management retreats through strategic planning efforts and participative management development and team-building exercises (The 1995 JIU accountability report showed an encouraging pattern of similar initiatives in other regional commissions and non-New York United Nations units as well.)[117]

(d) The vast majority of professional staff in these organizations have completed PAS training as scheduled, and several organizations have already begun their provisional year of applying the new system, including the unit and individual work plans. Others are still waiting to take this step, however, because of uncertainty about system revision or other organizational changes under way. It is essential to overcome hesitation in this area by recognizing that the provisional year will indeed bring PAS adjustments but, at the same time, not letting implementation of the new performance appraisal process stall indecisively in various parts of the Secretariat.

(e) Almost all these organizations have not yet revised their Organization Manual sections: some of their "current" descriptions of functions and structures have in fact not been updated since 1976. The units did, however, begin this process by preparing new organization charts as part of the 1996-1997 programme budget preparation process.

(f) Several OIOS reviews of operations of units in Geneva have been conducted or are under way, in contrast to a very small number of such reviews in the past. There is a risk that these recent reviews, conducted by teams sent from New York, do not provide sufficient dialogue to explore solutions for strengthening programmes and correcting problems encountered on a continuing basis. A very significant development, however, is the reviews of management structures and processes being made in two units, which are being conducted by external management consultants. The Inspector finds this to be an important addition to greater United Nations transparency and fresh ideas (as discussed further in Chapter VI.)

146. Within UNOG, which provides support services to the other units in Geneva, a major review was made in late 1994 by a former senior United Nations (and UNOG) manager, to begin to streamline UNOG administrative services and establish a much stronger "client services" approach. Several new managers have since been appointed. Additional delegation of personnel authority has been made, and strategic planning for human resources functions has begun in the Personnel Service along with initial workflow analysis in the Division of Administration. "Round table" discussions are being held to discuss

common administrative issues among the organizations, and officials of the other programmes have noted a more positive, service-oriented attitude at UNOG.

147. At the same time, however, a turn-around in UNOG performance will take time. The IMIS will not arrive in Geneva for several years, and additional delegation of financial management authority has not really begun. Meanwhile, the Conference Services Division has serious document processing backlogs, information technology arrangements are limited, overall paperwork processing is still tardy, and stronger cooperative operational decisions are needed from the "round table" process. Most importantly, the wide-spread attitude shift in UNOG from "but we've always done it this way" to "there's got to be a better way" does not come easily. The change has, however, begun. It must be pursued with determination.

148. Thus, changes are occurring in Geneva, and apparently in other non-New York duty stations as well. A good example is the Secretary-General's announcement of the appointment of the heads of three new regional commissions in 1995, in which he emphasized their managerial expertise.[118] Firm establishment of the new management culture in United Nations duty stations worldwide, however, ultimately depends not only on the major areas noted above, but above all on actually implementing the new decentralization and delegation processes.

149. A series of JIU reports have noted how past United Nations restructuring efforts promised to improve the centralization-decentralization balance. However, while they were quickly implemented at Headquarters, they foundered when the time came to devolve responsibilities and processes to the field.[119] The current Secretary-General has often expressed his firm belief in the importance of field operations and actions. Thus, the findings of the 1994 working group on the review of delegation of authority and the associated actions to assess field administrative situations, reformulate policy guidance and instructions, and review internal controls are indeed essential to bring the new accountability and responsibility system to life worldwide.[120] Only by overcoming the past, highly-centralized administrative systems and by empowering United Nations managers outside New York with proper delegation of authority, clear guidance, managerial information and support systems, and facilitation of their work by central staff units, can these managers be held fairly accountable for managing their operations in a flexible, responsive, and results-oriented way.

VI. MANAGEMENT REPORTING AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL BODY OVERSIGHT

"Member States...have stressed the need to be told, more clearly and more extensively...what has been the programmatic performance of the Secretariat.

...Let us say clearly and dispassionately what has been done and with which result, and equally what has not been done and why...Let us produce more analytical performance reports.

...I find the essential problem one of better and more transparent information, thus permitting better decisions."

Statement by the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management, in response to the Fifth Committee's severe criticisms of United Nations performance reporting in November 1985.[121]

150. This report is entitled "Management in the United Nations"because the ultimate leadership, responsibility, authority, and accountability for the Organization's management, good or poor, rest with not only with the top management of the Secretariat, but also with the General Assembly.

151. The 1995 JIU system-wide report on accountability observed that secretariats are responsible to governing bodies for wise resource use and programme results, but these bodies are themselves accountable in turn to Member States and publics for the same responsibilities. The report discussed the role of oversight governing bodies as the final key component of accountability in the United Nations system, and the closely related issue of effective reporting to them. The Inspectors found that a number of organizations had significant actions under way to appraise, streamline, rationalize, and reform the functioning and work methods of their governing bodies.[122]

152. The JIU report concluded that governing bodies set the tone for their entire organization. They must show through their actions and determined follow-up that they give high priority to firm accountability, management improvement, effective oversight, a performance culture, wise resource use, dynamism, and maximum implementation and achievement of organizational missions and objectives.[123] (In this regard, the Inspector was very disappointed to see, at the end of the Secretary-General's otherwise quite encouraging 1994 report on the new system of accountability and responsibility, the assertion that the intergovernmental bodies should concentrate on providing mandates and overall policy guidance, and leave execution and programme implementation to the Secretariat.[124] He understands the desire to minimize "micro-management", but regrets the implication that the intergovernmental bodies have no oversight role or responsibilities.)

153. The Inspectors observed in their 1995 system-wide accountability report that governing bodies should not attempt to interfere in details of daily operations, but secretariats should not block or disparage governing body attempts to oversee operations and management systems. The key to resolving "micro-management" problems is not to

struggle over details and individual decisions, but for both sides to concentrate on firm accountability, sound management and oversight processes, and much greater transparency to help build credibility and ensure positive results and effective use of the funds provided.[125]

154. In the United Nations the Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary) is the Main Committee of the General Assembly charged with oversight of United Nations management and administration. In this Chapter, the Inspector briefly identifies, for the consideration of Member States, some key issues and possibilities for reform concerning management reporting to (and external review for) the Fifth Committee, and enhancement of the Fifth Committee's leadership in performance oversight and accountability matters.

A. Management reporting and external review

155. A 1984 JIU report on reporting to ECOSOC identified the major barriers to effective ECOSOC decision-making as those caused by a flood of late, diverse, poorly-organized, and non-substantive Secretariat reports. The Secretary-General agreed that too many documents were descriptive rather than analytical, did not always identify precisely key policy issues, and often lacked policy recommendations for governing bodies to consider. He noted, however, that while Secretariat reports were often cautious, intergovernmental bodies also often requested repetitive reports although there were no new developments, as a substitute for a search among members of these bodies for compromise, concession and agreement.[126]

156. The Secretary-General endorsed the JIU conclusions and stated that efforts to provide more substantive reports would continue. Unfortunately, it seems that Secretariat reporting has improved only very slowly and in a few instances, as attested to by sharp General Assembly criticism of the quality and responsiveness of reports on management matters submitted to it in 1993.[127] It appears that many, if not most, Secretariat management reports are still as vague and uninformative as they were a decade ago, and far short of the clear reporting on programme performance so eloquently called for in the 1985 quote cited at the beginning of this Chapter.

157. Another fundamental management reporting problem is the weakness of the primary reporting tools - monitoring and evaluation reports. The 1988 JIU report on programme performance reporting analyzed in detail the biennial monitoring reports, particularly their tardy, untimely, and mechanistic tabulation of thousands of programme "outputs", which told intergovernmental bodies little about actual programme results and efficiency. Similarly, programme evaluation reports were often of good quality but covered only a few programmes, and self-evaluation was under-developed and essentially for internal use by programme managers. In addition, neither the internal audit nor the management services unit did any external reporting. Thus, intergovernmental bodies did not have the information on programme performance and results they needed to help determine future programmes and improve operations.[128]

158. The Secretary-General's 1994 report on the new accountability and responsibility system finally agreed that the programme performance report is a mechanical summation of a wide mixture of outputs with "not necessarily meaningful" implementation ratios, and that in-depth evaluation studies are too slow and too few. He announced plans to use self-

evaluation to focus the programme performance report more on assessing results, to increase the pace and problem-solving content of in-depth evaluations, and to make the financial data in the programme budget performance report more analytical.[129] However, since there has been no appreciable increase in the resources to carry out these functions, it appears that monitoring and evaluation will continue to provide only a small portion of the performance reporting and analysis that the Fifth Committee requires.

159. Fortunately, there are some new developments which can begin to fill this serious performance reporting and oversight gap, provide the transparency that the General Assembly has insisted on, and lead to much stronger performance reporting in the future. In addition to the continuing external reviews and reporting by the ACABQ, Board of Auditors, CPC, ICSC on personnel policy matters, and JIU (which are each discussed in some detail in a chapter of the 1995 JIU system-wide accountability report),[130] the following recent and significant reports have appeared:

(a) The new OIOS has begun issuing what may become about a dozen internal oversight reports each year on United Nations programmes and departments, and will be issuing an annual overall report to the General Assembly as well.

(b) A recent report providing a very interesting and frank assessment of United Nations humanitarian assistance performance in Rwanda was published, not as an official General Assembly or committee document, but as a general report on "lessons learned" under the names of two Secretariat staff members.[131]

(c) Although the Secretary-General had reported in 1993 that he had "consistently declined" increasingly frequent offers of voluntary funding conditioned on donor audit access or management reviews,[132] the United Nations signed an agreement in January 1995 with the European Communities, to allow certain forms of auditor access, financial information, and management discussions to agents of the Communities for projects which they finance or co-finance.[133]

(d) As already discussed, a detailed review of United Nations procurement processes, made by a high-level group of external experts, was published in December 1994,[134] and was followed by a Secretariat report in June 1995 on corrective actions being taken.

160. This "opening up" of public reporting and analysis of United Nations performance is most welcome. The Inspector finds the last item - the procurement review - to be particularly significant, for three reasons. First, in its 1995 accountability report, the JIU found that there has been a widespread increase in external management reviews made by Member States or by international management consulting firms of programmes and management systems of United Nations system organizations. These reports are then published, and they are often presented to and deliberated on by governing bodies.[135]

161. The JIU had proposed the use of external consultant studies in the United Nations in 1984, but the Secretary-General had resisted this approach unless specific, special requests were made by ECOSOC or the General Assembly. The Secretariat has gradually increased internal management consultant use, but the Inspector hopes in particular that the published, external procurement review will be followed by other, similar reviews. The Inspectors concluded in their 1995 report that such external review provides fresh thinking to reinvigorate management, better inform governing bodies on these matters, and add

expertise in technical or "cutting edge" areas where the organizations urgently need it. It also contributes significantly to the transparency and therefore the credibility of System organizations.[136]

162. Second, the procurement review led to the "breakthrough" implementation report by the Secretary-General already commended. This June 1995 report not only detailed the specific reform actions being taken, but gave specific time targets for their completion.[137] As already recommended in Chapter II of this report, the Inspector believes that it is absolutely critical to include such time-limited objectives in all unit work plans of the Secretariat, in reports on individual programme progress to intergovernmental bodies, and in any and all reviews of programmes made by internal and external oversight bodies. This statement of specific actions to be taken and completed provides the performance specificity which was promised in 1985 and which has been lacking for so long in the United Nations. Now that it has been introduced by the procurement report, it is critically important to continue to provide this "clear responsibility for programme delivery" which is the centerpiece of the new accountability system called for by General Assembly resolution 48/218 A.[138]

163. Third, as noted in the introductory quotations to this report, the Assembly has properly called on the Secretary-General to "provide adequate resources" to units for programme implementation.[139] At the same time, however, many intergovernmental bodies continue to heap "unfunded mandates" (i.e., new tasks to be implemented "within existing resources") on Secretariat units. The 1988 JIU report on programme performance reporting cited the "unlimited multiplication of objectives" added by subsidiary bodies, and found that in the 1982-1983 and 1984-1985 biennia about 15 per cent of Secretariat outputs (omitting the thousands of small public information outputs) were not originally programmed or approved, and another 25 per cent were changed during implementation.[140] As discussed earlier, this programming indiscipline more or less continues.

164. The inclusion of time-limited objectives in all unit work plans, and in any progress reports to the Fifth Committee and other bodies, should provide a clear focus on resource programming and adequacy. If implementation does not occur as planned, inadequate resources or poor resource planning may well be the major cause. Applying the General Assembly's insistence on "adequate resources for programme implementation" in all such reporting would be an important way for the Secretariat and the intergovernmental bodies to ensure proper programming and results discipline in all United Nations programmes.

165. Given the basic weakness of management reporting, however, stronger general measures are also very much needed. As discussed in the next section, the Fifth Committee is sinking under a flood of documentation. Increasingly, delegations, and particularly the small ones, are unable to cope. There are, however, basic reporting reforms which should be made in Secretariat management reporting to help to greatly reduce this document flood. The Inspector recommends that the Fifth Committee consider requiring the following changes for reports made to it (which could apply to General Assembly and other intergovernmental body reporting as well).

(a) **Summary**: Secretariat reports should emulate the practice of most organizations in the United Nations system, which require that every document have a brief summary at the front. Busy readers can then see at a glance the purpose, problem, conclusions, and recommended actions of the report.

(b) **Contents:** The many Secretariat reports which omit a table of contents are a great disservice, and almost an insult, to readers. All reports should contain a table of contents, to clearly show the structure of the report and allow readers to easily find the matters of interest to them.

(c) **On time:** In reviewing documents for this report, the Inspector was struck by how many Fifth Committee and General Assembly documents on administrative matters are dated (submitted for document processing) in October, November, or even December. Some documents are indeed last-minute requests, but most are requested by the General Assembly a year or two prior to their submission. The Fifth Committee has complained often about these greatly-delayed documents, but the practice continues. The Fifth Committee should insist that the "six-weeks rule" for circulating documents to Member States before discussion be much more firmly enforced, with sanctions for tardy reports.

(d) **Action-oriented:** If a matter is important enough to require a report, it should include analysis of any actions needed to better accomplish the related objectives. Cautious and bland overviews of past efforts and current conditions should be replaced with specific (and time-limited) proposals for corrective action.

(e) **Accountability:** Although almost every report should continue to be a "Secretary-General's report", in recognition of his ultimate responsibility, there is a general recognition that many such reports are actually drafted by lower-level, but "invisible", professional staff. The new accountability system should be applied to management reporting by clearly identifying the specific unit (which means below the department or office level) responsible for preparing each report, and any other contributing units. The report referred to earlier on humanitarian assistance in Rwanda provides an excellent example of attribution.

(f) **References:** Present Secretariat reports contain almost no endnotes, and then only vague text mention of "a prior report" or "resolutions" and a note like "E/AC.51/68 Add. 1". Key references are not pedantic or mere research, but an important part of good management analysis. They provide the "replicability" and "credibility" that allow the reader to identify and examine key documents and to recognize a professional, complete, and objective report. The recent reports of the high-level procurement experts, the intergovernmental working group on proper resource management, and the Secretariat on alleged fraud provide good examples of the inclusion of informative references.[141] Proper reports for policy-making purposes require appropriate citations, with document titles, dates, and paragraph references added to the minimal and often confusing United Nations documentation symbols.

(g) **Graphics:** Most Secretariat management reports provide very few, if any, charts and graphs, and the tables provided are often endless rows and even pages of detailed numbers, instead of succinct quantitative summaries. One good picture continues to be worth a thousand words. In the era of "desktop publishing", the Secretariat should join other System organizations in providing Member States with many more report tables and graphs that clearly and concisely show major trends, patterns, and status. (Welcome additions, for example, would be simple pie charts showing each year the total sources (by type) and uses (by programmes) of United Nations funds received, and the total staff (by category) and their deployment to programmes: the General Assembly has already moved toward such increased transparency and timely reporting by requesting summary financial statements every three months.[142])

(h) **"Question period"**: Management reports are often cumbersome and rigid, and are "one way." Much more impact can sometimes be achieved by periodic appearances of key officials before the Fifth Committee for a dialogue, with back-and-forth discussions and questions on progress made and problems encountered. This practice occurs widely in national governments, and senior DAM officials have recently held such briefing sessions on the new management reforms with the Fifth Committee, to apparent good effect.

(i) **Necessary and substantive:** The Fifth Committee and other intergovernmental bodies must do their parts. Excess reporting greatly disrupts other Secretariat tasks. As the Secretary-General noted a decade ago, bodies should not request "a report" as a way to postpone or avoid their responsibilities for negotiations and discussions to reach decisions, but require instead only those reports that are essential to help them effectively fulfill their oversight and policy-making functions.

(j) **Focused:** In a closely related consideration, where reports are indeed needed, the Fifth Committee, General Assembly, and other intergovernmental bodies should state as clearly and specifically as possible the substantive issues which the requested Secretariat report should address.

B. Accountability for accountability

166. This section title is identical to that for the section ending Chapter II. It thus emphasizes the parallel and central roles of the "strategic planning" unit proposed in Chapter II and the intergovernmental role of the Fifth Committee in establishing and effectively using the new United Nations system of accountability and responsibility. There has been much discussion of intergovernmental body reform inside and outside the United Nations in recent years and as the fiftieth anniversary has approached. Attention has largely focused on the Security Council, ECOSOC and the many bodies in the economic and social fields, new Executive Boards in United Nations funds and programmes, and the General Assembly itself.

167. The Fifth Committee, however, faces very intense pressures. More than any other Main Committee, the Fifth Committee has been forced by its workload into what has become almost a year-around session, beginning in September of one year and meeting in "resumed session" until a new "session" begins in September of the next year. The sessions also contain a continual flood of documentation. Reports on the status of documentation for the committee at any given time run on to eleven pages or more of reports to be considered, some of which have been pending for months. Agenda items must be continually shuffled, and programmes of work, formerly prepared for the entire autumn session, must now be prepared by the Secretariat on a tentative, week-by-week basis as the session goes on and on. This is very difficult and demanding for the Member State delegations and the Secretariat, and especially for the smaller delegations which have enough difficulty juggling their attendance and attention to Fifth Committee and other bodies and issues under the best of conditions.

168. The Fifth Committee is currently considering possible ways of improving its work in light of this overwhelming work burden. Because a strong Fifth Committee role is essential to successfully implement the new accountability and responsibility system, the Inspector

would also like to recommend four broad possibilities for strengthened functioning as a contribution to the Committee's reflections.

169. The first two possibilities endorse those made in a detailed recent analysis of the operations of the United Nations decision-making machinery. This study observed that all the complex issues which the world now thrusts upon the United Nations system's intergovernmental machinery cannot be efficiently compressed into calendars that were set forty years ago. Plenary and committee sessions of many multilateral and national governing bodies are far more extensive every year than those of the General Assembly and its committees. In addition, forcing more and more items into a compressed calendar risks hastily-adopted, mediocre decisions on management and other matters that result in high costs in time expended, resources misapplied and subsequent problems created.[143]

170. The Fifth Committee, operating as a "board of directors" with 185 Member States considering all types of complex and worldwide management issues, can hardly operate effectively. This is particularly true given Member States' very diverse interests: even if each "director" is immovable on only one or two small (or large) issues, the overall result approaches a giant gridlock. The above study proposes, first, that Member States begin by commissioning a review of the business flows through the machinery, conducted by an international team of top-quality professional legislative managers. Second, the working calendar needs to be "opened up" during the full course of each year to establish an integral chain of business.[144] The Fifth Committee is certainly a prime candidate both for such an expert "streamlining" analysis, and for an orderly work pattern over the year for the many urgent operational decisions it must make.

171. The Inspector also believes that the present overpowering complexity of the Fifth Committee's work programme can be countered by the traditional solutions: division of labour and specialization. The 1995 JIU report on accountability showed that many governing bodies in the United Nations system now have or are establishing specialized subcommittees and other reforms, in order to devote more continuous attention to administrative, management and oversight matters.[145]

172. In light of the tremendous workload of the Fifth Committee, its central accountability for accountability, and the imperative of doing something to improve the present situation, the Inspector suggests the possibility of three new subcommittees. He does so with a certain trepidation because the track record for political bodies like the Fifth Committee is to dilute the efficacy of newly created subordinate bodies by simply "providing jobs for our boys." If it is not possible to bypass the spoils system and to create small, truly professional subcommittees acting in full transparency, it would be better to avoid the expense and complications of additional, politicized subsidiary bodies.

173. However, if professionalism and competence can be assured, these subcommittees could have small but balanced memberships; meet regularly throughout the year as required; rotate membership but with sufficiently long terms to allow development of the necessary expertise; not prejudice the functions of existing bodies and organs elsewhere in the intergovernmental structure; operate in full transparency; and in all cases report back to, and be responsible to, the full Fifth Committee. The three new subcommittees could be as follows.

(a) **Peace-keeping management subcommittee:** All sources agree that decisions on the financing and administration of peace-keeping and other special missions are the

greatest single burden of current Fifth Committee work. This subcommittee would permit more knowledgeable, integrated, and expeditious decision-making in this technical, high-pressure management area.

(b) **Strategic planning and management subcommittee:** This subcommittee would work closely with the Secretary General, senior officials of DAM, and the strategic planning unit recommended in Chapter II, to ensure that management reform and strategic responses throughout the Secretariat are coherent, creative, and coordinated, and that the new system of accountability becomes and remains a dynamic, effective process for producing stronger United Nations programme results.

(c) **Oversight subcommittee:** Reviews of internal and external oversight reports by this subcommittee could do more than perhaps any other single mechanism to establish and ensure a strong performance culture and results emphasis throughout the United Nations. It could also much more effectively coordinate and streamline the review work done by the OIOS and the various small external oversight bodies - the ACABQ, CPC, Board of Auditors, ICSC in personnel policy matters, and JIU.

174. Fourth and finally, many national governments have legislative staffs and analysts to help them oversee governmental operations. The JIU proposed this idea of modest staff aid along with external expert analysis to assist the CPC in 1984, but the Secretary-General was opposed and the CPC itself was ambiguous.[146] Now, however, the Fifth Committee is exploring this idea. The Inspector believes that establishing one or two full-time professional staff posts for each of the above subcommittees could have a great positive impact on the future oversight and decision-making effectiveness of the Fifth Committee.

175. The United Nations has often been criticized for establishing many grand objectives and goals in all areas over the years, without paying much attention to whether the Organization's subsequent programmes actually contribute to progress toward these goals. The Fifth Committee, with reforms such as those suggested above, must be a critical leader and "linch pin" in the new system of accountability and responsibility, driving the United Nations continuously toward the management reforms and "transparency and effectiveness" which the General Assembly has called for.

ANNEX

FIFTY-YEAR CAPSULE SUMMARY OF EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH UNITED NATIONS MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS[147]

1950s

1950: The General Assembly first stressed the need for careful programme reviews to effectively use available resources.

1953: The Secretary-General made a comprehensive review of the work and structure of the Secretariat to concentrate resources on priority programmes which could be performed effectively, and to launch a "continuing self-criticism" of programme implementation.

1956: The Office of Personnel found that "not all staff were aware of procedures" for periodic staff performance reports, and issued new guidance.

1958: After the General Assembly called for concentration on the highest-priority tasks and "the utmost economy" in resource use, the United Nations budget was reformed to concentrate on objects of expenditure and consolidated staffing tables.

1960s

1961-1962: A committee of experts appointed by the General Assembly recommended budgetary stabilization, enforcement of programme priorities, closer scrutiny of budgets by governing bodies, and greater administrative control and analysis of the budget: the General Assembly responded by calling for an integrated budget policy.

1966: Another group of experts called on the United Nations and the system to deal with a financial crisis through integrated planning, programming, budgeting and evaluation systems; clear objectives and strategies; strengthened evaluations and internal reviews; timely annual reporting to governing bodies on progress made and results obtained; establishment of the JIU; and strengthened management oversight by the external auditors.

1968a: The Secretary-General established a report to evaluate work programme accomplishments and ensure real value for money in operations: however, by 1971, these reports had reverted to purely financial documents.

1968b: Another expert group on reorganization cited the need for new budgetary techniques, an effective management service, and systematic budget review and organizational reform.

1969a: The CPC concluded that rapidly growing United Nations system programmes would encounter increasing Member State criticism and public disillusionment unless greater review and evaluation efforts were made, especially detailed and systematic review from intergovernmental bodies.

1969b: The "Capacity Study" characterized the United Nations system as a highly complex and disorganized machine, badly in need of systematic management procedures and programming, information, and evaluation processes.

1969c (and 1974): JIU studies noted that the United Nations had fallen behind the large specialized agencies in installing medium-term planning and programme budgeting systems.

1969d: An Administrative Management Service (AMS) was established to ensure that the best management practices and techniques would be used in the Secretariat, and to undertake an extensive survey of manpower utilization.

1970s

1971: A JIU report found a "'crisis of modernization" in Secretariat personnel management due to rapid staff growth, much more complex work tasks, and confusions about the management skills and management reform actions needed, and urged a series of changes in personnel policies, methods, and processes which the General Assembly endorsed.

1972a: The ACABQ criticized cumbersome United Nations legislative machinery and fragmented decision-making, and urged review of the budget format to allow Member States to relate inputs to outputs and determine whether they were getting their money's worth.

1972b: The Secretary-General acknowledged the decade's delay in establishing an integrated programme planning system (see 1961-1962): he proposed such a system to greatly aid governing-body decision-making with coordinated information on past performance, present proposals, and implications for the future.

1973: After criticism from the CPC and ACABQ, the Secretary-General acknowledged that evaluation had not yet begun, but would be an essential part of future budget procedures.

1974: The first biennial programme budget was initiated (for 1974-1975), and the first medium-term plan (for 1974-1977, subsequently changed to a six-year plan for the 1984-1989 period).

1975a: The Secretary-General acknowledged that there was still "no systematic evaluation of results", which was the "key problem" which the medium-term plan did not yet cover.

1975b: Yet another group of experts, and a working group, recommended strengthening CPC for planning, programming, coordination, and programme review, as a mechanism to effectively evaluate programme implementation and results.

1976: The Fifth Committee expressed concern that the management services potential and recommendations of the AMS (see 1969) were being ignored, and the General Assembly reemphasized the need for competent internal machinery, the necessary mandate, senior management support, and sufficient resources for management improvement work.

1997a: The Secretariat reported that the staff performance evaluation system was much criticized by the staff, and developed a new format with an elaborate rebuttal system (see 1956).

1977b: After two years of deliberation, an Ad Hoc Committee's work led the General Assembly to a "restructuring resolution" to reshape the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system, including improved programme planning and evaluation.

1978a: The Secretary-General issued a brief but substantive report on the implementation of personnel policy reforms, especially the intent to establish a career development system, but personnel management then settled back into ad hoc personnel reports or detailed statistics with very limited policy or progress information.

1978b: The ACABQ noted with concern the difficulties of establishing management training "to create and sustain a management climate" in the Secretariat: the Secretary-General promised to give high priority to management skills and training in the future, but little happened.

1978c: A special review by the Board of Auditors led to a programme of major improvements in financial management and controls: the Board also recommended that the scope of internal audit be expanded and auditor skills be steadily upgraded.

1978-1979: The Secretary-General acknowledged again that there was "no systematic evaluation" and that improved budgeting procedures and better budget submissions and workplans were needed to enhance performance monitoring and the identification of marginal activities.

1979: A proposal for a much-strengthened external audit function, under an Auditor-General, was considered by the General Assembly but not acted upon.

1980s

1981: JIU found that, despite a small evaluation unit finally established in 1980, the United Nations had fallen behind most other United Nations system organizations in developing and using evaluation.

1982: The General Assembly established programming regulations and rules, inter alia to subject all programmes to periodic and thorough reviews and periodically evaluate the results achieved.

1983a: A report to the General Assembly which acknowledged slow progress in establishing even a minimal evaluation system was sharply criticized by the CPC and "deplored" by the General Assembly.

1983b: Secretariat officials blamed tardy programme budget issuance on the complexity of the process, and launched a long, slow search for new budgetary processes, procedures, and formats.

1983-1984: Secretariat officials branded the staff performance evaluation system "quite meaningless and totally unreliable", and developed a revised system with more dialogue, increased rebuttal procedures, and careful monitoring to ensure an effective system (see 1977a): despite continuing sharp criticisms, some minor modifications were made in 1984.

1984: A JIU report found reporting to ECOSOC to be voluminous, tardy, and uninformative: the Secretary-General agreed that - if intergovernmental bodies would more strongly support the deliberative process - the Secretariat would strive to produce more analytical documents, highlight key policy issues, and prepare more concise and results-oriented reports.

1985a: As suggested by yet another outside expert group, an internal task force, and pressure from the General Assembly, CPC, and the JIU, the Secretary-General established small central evaluation and monitoring units, but JIU found the United Nations to be lagging even further behind other System agencies in the assessment of results to improve future programmes.

1985b: The General Assembly strongly criticized programme performance reporting and repeated the necessity of strengthening monitoring and evaluation, and the Secretariat promised more transparent and analytical reports on performance and results.

1985c: A JIU report found that computer systems development in the Secretariat required urgent action to upgrade ineffective systems and attain management improvements and cost savings: after an even sharper Secretariat evaluation in 1987, the Secretary-General acknowledged "widespread dissatisfaction" with the many outdated administrative computer systems and the "severe repercussions" on Secretariat operations, and launched the IMIS project.

1985-1986: Outside consultants found that internal audit coverage was ineffective, particularly away from Headquarters, and recommended a large increase in audit staff and their skills, which did not occur: the "Group of 18" experts also urged much greater independence for the internal auditors.

1986: The "Group of 18" experts cited the importance of monitoring and evaluation, but devoted most of their attention to planning and budgetary issues and to calls for strengthened human resources management and leadership.

1987: The accuracy, objectivity, fairness and format of the staff performance evaluation system were again sharply criticized, but after some discussion no action was taken (see 1983-1984).

1988: The JIU found major problems with disorderly programme budgeting processes and programme performance, evaluation, and management reports: the General Assembly twice endorsed the JIU call for reports emphasizing programme results and quality, but the Secretariat argued that the evaluation system was still too weak to provide such reporting and settled for minor performance reporting adjustments.

1989: The General Assembly called on the Secretary-General, as it had in 1983 and 1985, to complete development of a comprehensive career development plan, which would recognize merit through a rational performance evaluation and reporting system.

1990s

1990: The ACABQ expressed real doubts about the value of the medium-term plan, its verbosity and length, the quality of intergovernmental reviews, the lack of relevant evaluation activities, and programme performance reports that were of little use.

1990-1992: The General Assembly repeatedly urged action to strengthen internal controls, through more stringent oversight and assurance of compliance, and decisive action to deal with fraudulent resource use.

1992a: A Secretary-General's report acknowledged that a career development system was "indispensable" and that efforts had been "going on for sometime", but stated that the entire concept needed now to be rethought (see 1978a and 1989): the General Assembly welcomed and encouraged an integrated personnel planning approach.

1992b: The Secretary-General reported that the organization had "been operating in slow motion" and required optimum use of human resources, new ways of thinking, modern management practices, and "an integrated approach to all the interrelated managerial issues".

1992c: The Secretary-General concluded that leadership and management quality were crucial to meet pressing operational challenges, and launched a new, comprehensive system of management training to link managerial skills with better programme delivery.

1993a: The General Assembly expressed strong concern at late issuance of documents; a lack of sustained and timely dialogue with the Secretariat; and the failure to analyse restructurings undertaken, the control and management of posts, and reform of the administration of justice.

1993b: The Secretary-General announced a new placement and promotion system with increased transparency which would reward staff for competence, creativity, versatility, and, increasingly, mobility.

1993c: The Secretary-General concluded that DAM must play a crucial role in transforming the Organization, especially in responding to changing requirements and ensuring a timely flow of information and effective consultations with Member States.

1993d: A group of experts considered a new programme planning format and approach and concluded bluntly that "Much more time is spent on reviewing plans and budgets than on implementation and evaluation" and that "This imbalance needs to be corrected".

1993e: The General Assembly regretted that a Secretariat report on the accountability of programme managers, which it had requested for several years, was inadequate; noted the parallel JIU report which identified many existing accountability and oversight problems; requested that a new "transparent and effective" system of accountability and responsibility be established by 1 January 1995; and also urged a complete review of the existing performance evaluation system "without delay"(see 1987).

1993-1994: The small internal oversight units were consolidated into a single and more independent Office of Internal Oversight Services, headed by an Under-Secretary-General and reporting both to the Secretary-General and the General Assembly.

1994-1995: The Secretariat launched the new system of accountability and responsibility and a new human resources strategy and planning capability, together with such actions as expanded management training, a commitment to overcome the inadequacies of mechanical programme performance reporting and very limited evaluation studies and a streamlined programme planning and budgeting process (see 1983b, 1988 and 1990), testing of a new performance appraisal system, the final stages of IMIS establishment (see 1985), revision of the Organization Manual and other guidance and instructions, efforts to delegate additional authority to the field, a reexamination of internal controls, proposals to reform the administration of justice, a major review of procurement, and new public review and reporting initiatives.

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146. "Reporting to the Economic and Social Council", A/39/281 and Add. 1, op.cit., paras. 20-23, 26, 44-48, 57-68,

"Reporting to the Economic and Social Council" Comments of the Secretary-General", document A/39/281, Add. 2 of 6 July 1984, para. 20,

"Reporting to ECOSOC ... Further comments ...", A/40/284, op.cit, paras. 7-8, 50 and 58, and

"Report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination", A/40/38, paras. 557-558.

147. The following material is taken from the relevant sections of this report and four other JIU reports, which also contain the appropriate document citations:

"Reporting on the performance and results of United Nations programmes", A/43/124, op. cit., Annex I "Evolution of programme performance review and reporting, 1950-1987" and Chapters III.B and IV.

"Accountability and oversight in the United Nations Secretariat", A/48/420, op. cit., Chapters III and IV.

"Advancement of women in the United Nations Secretariat in an era of 'human resources management' and 'accountability'", A/49/176, op. cit., Chapter V.A, V.B, and Chapter II.B., and

"Toward a new system of performance appraisal in the United Nations Secretariat", A/49/219, op. cit., Chapter III.A.